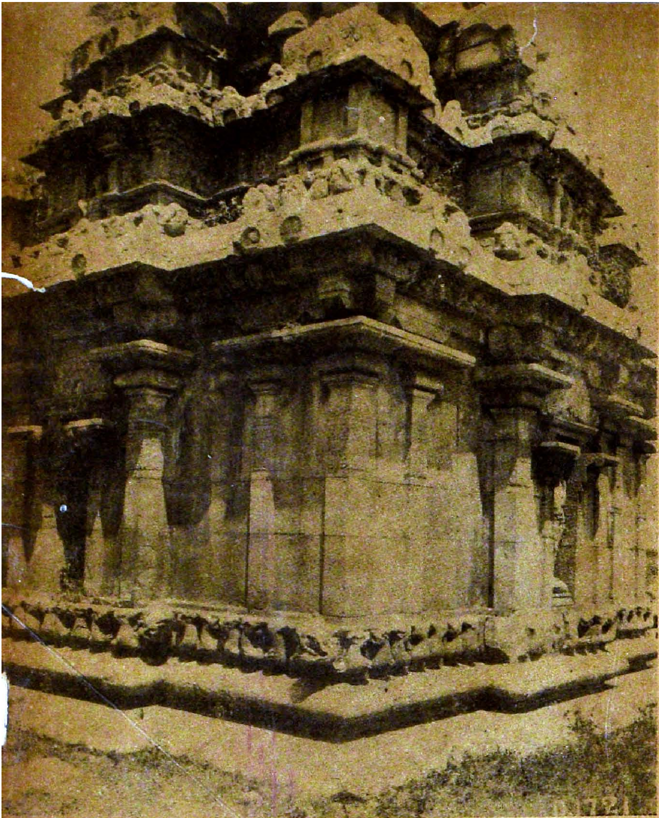

Muvarkovil: Detail of Plinth and Cornice (Frontispiece)

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B

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE VELLAR BASIN

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

THE IRUKKUVELS OF KODUMBALUR

★

A STUDY IN VELLALA ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY

★

By

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WITH A FOREWORD

by

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DEDICATION

TO

Lt. Col. Sir. A. L. MUDALIAR

M. D., LL. D., D. SC. D. C. L. (*Oxon.*)

The Distinguished Vice-Chancellor of our University

TO WHOSE WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT
THESE PAGES OWE THEIR EXISTENCE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A. R. E.	...	*Annual Report of Epigraphy* (*Madras*).
E. C.	...	*Epigraphia Carnatica.*
E. I.	...	*Epigraphia Indica.*
H. I. S. I.	...	*Historical Inscriptions of South India.*
I. A.	...	*Indian Antiquary.*
I. H. Q.	...	*Indian Historical Quarterly.*
J. B. B. R. A. S.	...	*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
J. I. H.	...	*Journal of Indian History.*
J. O. R.	...	*Journal of Oriental Research.*
J. R. A. S.	...	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
P. I. I.	...	*Pudukottai Inscriptions.*
S. I. I.	...	*South Indian Inscriptions.*
Q. J. M. S.	...	*Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society.*
T. A. S.	...	*Travancore Archaeological Series.*

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This book travels over a desert tract of South Indian history and the Velir chieftains with whom it is concerned are like the veritable oases of this desert land, of which many have heard but which only a few have actually seen. Our *Sangam poems* no doubt speak elaborately of these chieftains, whose munificence and generosity have continually called for the wonder and praise of the people of this land. But a scientific enquiry into the origin and early history of these chieftains, who must have had a long history going far into antiquity to beget them such historic fame in the first centuries of the Christian era, has not been so far made. This little book makes for the first time such an attempt into these great questions affecting an important group of people, whose progeny are assuredly still with us spanning the length and breadth of South India in the great Vellala community.

As a study covering regions hitherto unexplored, it brings to the surface many new facts and views, which I do hope would call for consideration from the careful reader. One such fact is what our sources describe as "the northern origin" of the Velir people. This might stagger many. What these sources indicate without doubt is that

the Velir were found in the north in early times and for many generations. There is indeed nothing precluding their having gone northwards from the south at some time in the dawn of history or in the period of pre-history and come down to the south at the time to which our sources again unmistakably refer. But a contrary turn of events also is not unlikely. That there were such north-to-south migrations in ancient India is, however, a fact almost daily borne out by our ever-increasing sources and this book only registers what is thus borne out.

Before closing this small preface, I have as in duty bound to thank my numerous friends and advisers whose encouragement has always acted as an unfailing staff in my ploddings in the arid field of research and I am particularly thankful to Prof. T. K. Venkataraman of Pachaiyappa's College, who was my Director, during the whole course of this study. To two great persons, however, I owe not merely thanks but a deep sense of gratitude, since but for them this work would never have been written. They are the Rev. H. Heras, S. J., Director of the Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay, to whom I owe the idea of the subject. He was interested in it himself and did the good office of passing it on to me, when I had gone to his Institute in the July of 1932 avid for research. The seed he had then sown would perhaps never have germinated but for the

encouragement given to me by the other great person, Lt. Col. Sir A. L. Mudaliar, then President of the Pachaiyappa's Trust Board and now the distinguished Vice-Chancellor of our University. I owe to those two more than words could ever convey.

I am also happy to acknowledge with thanks the kindness of the Department of Archaeology (Southern circle) and particularly its Superintendent, Mr. K. R. Srinivasan, for their kindness in furnishing me with the three excellent photographs which appear in this book.

Special thanks are due to the National Art Press, Madras and particularly to its Chairman, Mr. R. S. Srikantan, for the expeditious and neat way in which this book has been brought out. Diacritical marks have been avoided, since I thought they would be meaningless and positively confusing in a book that is of a wide general interest. I have adopted the current spelling of historical words and terms, while the traditional spelling has been retained with regard to well-known names of places and persons.

'RIVERSIDE'
Little Mount, Madras.
19th March 1954.

M. A.

FOREWORD

Some periods of Indian History have been styled the *dark ages* of India, not because the light of civilisation did not shine upon the country during them, but because of the very scanty knowledge we have of their historical setting. That darkness is subjective rather than objective.

The period studied in this little volume is one of those rightly qualified as dark, for we know very little of it. Hence its appearance is all the more to be welcomed by all lovers of South Indian History. The present writer is not totally disconnected with the selection of this subject by Dr M. Arokiaswami when he started his research. A previous visit to the temples of Kodumbalur, thanks to the kindness and munificence of His Highness Shri Brihadamba Das Rajagopala Tondaiman, Raja of Pudukkotai, made me realise the importance of the dynasty whose representatives had built those remarkable monuments; and I was very happy when the author of this book, accepting my suggestion, directed his attention to that dynasty and to its prehistory, (which has crystallized in the narrative of the important migrations of the Vel or Velalas from the plains of Northern India down to Tamilnad.

The inscriptions of the Indus Valley have confirmed the history of these migrations. In an article contributed to the *Indian Historical Quarterly* of Calcutta long ago, I showed how the Velalas are, in those ancient inscriptions, supposed to be the owners of a large tract at the foot of the Himalayas[1]; and indeed east of the Indus Valley[2]. The same epigraphs call them Velir[3], which is a name also given them at a later period; while their king is styled ***Mukililmukan***, "one who draws the house of clouds", a title which may be fully equated with the name ***karalar***, "rulers of the clouds", given to the kings of the Velir during the historical period[4]. (The existence of the Velalas and their kings in northern India in those ancient times fully justifies the tradition of their migration to the South, where they play such an important role at a later period.)

Incidentally the Velar basin which became the original southern home of these Vels seems also to have been known to the people of the Indus Vally. Vellore and the tradition of its foundation connected with the ***nandukal*** flower is referred to in one of the inscriptions[5]. Moreover another inscription, which mentions a victorious ***Kolikon***

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1. Heras, "The Velalas in Mohenjo Daro", *I. H. Q.*, XIV (1939), pp. 46-47, 52-53.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
5. Heras, *Studies in Proto-Indo-Mediterranean Culture*, I, p. 125-126.

PART I

EARLY HISTORY OF THE VELLAR BASIN

(a title of the Cola kings) speaks of the three rivers of this king which cannot be other than the Kaveri, which passes through the centre of the Cola kingdom, and the northern and southern Velar which mark the traditional northern and southern boundaries of the Cola dominions[6] These very three rivers are still mentioned in an ancient ***venba*** attributed by some to Auvaiyar[7].

The importance of the Irukkuvels in South Indian history may be appraised in the proper perspective if we have in mind that the Hoysalas of Mysore seem to be one of their most glorious offshoots. The history of the ancient Irukkuvels is thus linked with the history of the Vijayanagar Empire, whose last monarchs witnessed the setting of their sun precisely in Vellore not far from the Velar basin. Such is the fate of history!

Dr M. Arokiaswami may be rightly proud of his work. The Irukkuvels of Kodumbalur will, through his industry, be acknowledged in future as one of the founders of South Indian History and Culture. The early Velalas could not find a better chronicler of their glorious achievements.

KODAIKANAL,
15th March, 1954.

H. HERAS, S.J.

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6. Cf. Heras, "The 'Kolikon' in Mohenjo Daro" *New Indian Antiquary* I (1938), pp. 287-279.
7. Cf. Nilakanta Sastri *The Colas*, I, p, 22, note.

INTRODUCTION

I

THE SUBJECT FOR INVESTIGATION

I owe an apology to the reader for the rather long title of this book. But I hope that its length is amply compensated by the exact definition it gives to the subject.

The territory covered by the basin of the Vellar includes a large part of the modern district of Trichinopoly (including the old State of Pudukottah within its limits) and the Tanjore region, comprising the area watered by the Vellar, which, rising from the Velamalai in the Marangapuri tract of Kulitalai Taluk in Trichinopoly District falls into the sea to the north of Manamelkudi in Tanjore District after running a course of nearly 85 miles. It is the longest river of the old Cola kingdom after the well-known Cauvery, the Ganges of South India. The Vellar also partakes of the sanctity attached to rivers in India and the *Tirupperundurai-puranam* refers to a tradition which has it that the river was sent down to the earth by Lord Siva himself in answer to the prayer of King Svetaketu, who prayed to the Lord for a river that would wash away the stains of sin. Whatever the truth of this may be, a few places like Peraiyur, Pushyatturai, Kadaykkudi and Tiruvidayapatti

arose as sacred bathing ghats all along its course in due time.

It is the early history of the region watered by this sacred river that this book attempts to relate. The object of undertaking this study is to reveal the hitherto unsuspected history and importance of this river basin. Though in later history it was a part of the great Cola empire, in early times beginning from atleast the II century of the Christian era down to the IX it played an important role as the junction of the various rival dynasties which bade for supremacy in the south. If it is true that geography determines the course of history in any country, it was all the more so with regard to the valley of the Vellar. Like another place in the district of Trichinopoly, Karur, which by a *tour de force* is identified as the capital of the Ceras of the West Coast, the basin of the Vellar often furnished the boundary for the kingdoms of the Pallavas and the Colas at one time and of the Pandyas and the Colas at another in well-known historical times. Its earlier history is not less significant. The numerous dolmens and ancient burial sites thrown up by the labours of the archeologist, the Roman coins of the Karukkakuricci finds of 1898, the Pali and Brahmi inscriptions of Eladipattam (Sittanavasal), the Pallava-Grantha records found in many places in the region like Tirumayam, Tirugokarnam and Kudumiamalai, the Cola-Grantha record of Kodumbalur, the old caverns and rock-cut temples of which there are not less than 15 in the old State of Pudukottah itself—all these and many more are standing monuments of the ancient glory of the Vellar basin.

The city of Kodumbalur is itself a city of great antiquity, though to-day it is a small village situated in the

Kulattur area twenty-five miles from the town of Pudukottah. Even now traces of ruined forts, guest-quarters (*viduthikkara punja*) and stables, where once horses were kept, are to be seen round about the place; and as early as the II century of the Christian era, to which period the great Tamil epic *Silappadikaram* refers, mention is made of the large tank of the place and the strong fort that surrounded it in a line occuring in the *Kadukankathai* of the work, "kodumbai nedungulakkotagam" (line: 71). The passage in which this occurs would further indicate that Kodumbalur in those far-off days lay on the trunk road to Madurai from the Cola country. Even to-day this insignificant place has to show a few architectural remains of which the so-called 'Muvarkovil' is one; and they cannot be explained unless we postulate a period when it was perhaps the capital of a flourishing chieftaincy. Such was the chieftaincy of the Irrukuvels.

Doubtless these chieftains occupy an important place in early South Indian history; since from the records we possess they appear to have enjoyed a long spell of influence and potency in South India beginning right from the times of the Sangam (accepted as the period from the second century A. D.) down to the XII or the XIII century A. D., down to even the final decline of the Cola power in this region. During this period of roughly a millenium the Irukkuvels have indeed played a very important part in the moulding of South Indian history and politics first as the supporters of the Pallava hegemony aud then that of the imperial Colas, supporting the former as powerful feudatories at Kodumbalur and the latter as responsible officers, who, stationed throughout the empire, served everywhere as the axle behind the wheel of the complicated

and elaborate Cola administrative system, justifying in a large measure the statement of Dr. Fleet that "the history of the supreme dynasties would not be complete without a detailed notice of some of the more important feudatory families by the agency of which the paramount sovereigns carried on the administration of their dominions"[1]

A careful study of the Irukkuvel history thus reveals many new facts and lights up many old ones concerning the history of both the imperial Pallavas and the Colas and is of invaluable help in the study of the history of these dynasties at various points. Though scholars have heretofore just mentioned in passing the names of these chieftains,[2] a detailed study of their origin, rise to power, achievement and many other like problems connected with them have not yet been entered into. Hence the need for the present study.

Now the need to call this work the "Early History of the Vellar Basin with special reference to the Irukku-vels of Kodumbalur" arose because of the fact that the

1. Fleet, *Canarese Dynasties* p. 535.

2. Rao Bahadur Venkayya and Krishna Sastri were the first to notice an inscription at Kodumbalur ascribable to these chieftains in their A. R. E. for 1907–08, which was discussed latterly at some length by K. A. N. Sastri and Rev. H. Heras in the J. O. R. and J. R. A. S. in the Januaries of 1933 and '34 respectively. Prof. Sastri has a discussion on them again in his monumental work on the Colas (*The Colas* Vol. I). Mr. G. Radhakrishna Iyer has a small appendix on them in his *General History of the Pudukottai State*. The same state has recently published a descriptive account of the monuments in the state, in which the Muvarkovil at Kodumbalur ascribed to these chiefs is also dealt with. But for these, the history of these chieftains is yet unwritten. I am informed by the Curator, State Museum, Pudukottah that a book by K. R. Venkataraman on the "Irukkuvèl-Muttaraiyan relations" is soon to be bublished.

origin and the early history of the Irukkuvels is not confined to any one kingdom. On the other hand, they appear as one among a whole host of Vel (or Velir) families, of whom we come across a large number in the Sangam poems, settled more or less in and around the Cola and Pandyan limits. In other words, they are found gathered together roughly in the basin created by the Vellar of which old Tamil poets mention two[3] as forming the southern and northern boundaries of the early Chola kingdom. Possibly this refers only to one river running in two directions at different points and named so perhaps after the Vel cheiftains themselves who had settled along their banks and within the territory covered by them.

It is at any rate but reasonable to suppose that as immigrants into the south in search of new lands and "pastures new" they chose to settle down preferrably in the fertile regions watered by these rivers. Dr. Vincent Smith in his *Oxford History of India* refers to the connection between prosperity of dynasties and the location of their rule in river valleys, in other words, on the salutary effect exercised by proximity to rivers upon the growth and prosperity of dynasties.[4] Looked at from this point of view, the settlement of the early Vel families along the

3. "கடல்கிழக்குத் தெற்குக் கரைபுரள்வெள் ளாறு
குடதிசையில் கோட்டைக் கரையும்—வடதிசையில்
ஏனாட்டு வெள்ளாற் றிருபத்து நாற்காதம்
சோனாட்டுக் கெல்லையெனச் சொல்"

This *venba* is ascribed to Kamban by some (See *Colamandala-sadakam* p. 56) and to Avvai by others (See *Taylor's Mss* III, p. 42.)

4. Smith, *Oxford History,* p. iv. Prof. Coupland's suggestion in one of his books on the resolution of the Indian deadlock, in which he advocates the division of India on the basis of river basins is only reviving the old argument in a new way. (See Coupland, ***Future*** *Constitution of India* Pt. ii).

course of rivers explains itself, and offers in my view a good justification for styling the present study as the "Early History of the Vellar Basin."

II

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Inscriptions: Inscriptions directly bearing on the history of these chieftains are few; but they yield a good deal of information, when studied in the background of contemporary political history. Further, inscriptions like the Kuram plates of Paramesvaravarman, the Gadval plates of Vikramaditya and a few others like them serve as indirect sources here.

A Cola-grantha inscription from the Muvarkovil at Kodumbalur[5] is very useful in giving us the geneology of twelve of these chieftains with a note on the achievements of six of them. Now, when these achievements are read in the context of the political history of the period, they furnish important details with regard to the history of these chieftains.

The date of the inscription has been, however, put in doubt on account of paleographical difficulties[6] and on account of the mention of names similar to Bhuti Vikramakesari (chieftain 10 of the geneology) in inscriptions of the X century A. D., of the reign of Parantaka II Sundara Cola,[7] to which date the achievements of the chieftain mentioned in the Muvarkovil Inscription cannot

6. A. R. E. Loc., cit.

7. Sastri; J. O. R. Vol. VII. p. 4.

possibly refer. This is, of course, a crucial difficulty. Hope, however, remains that this can be solved without a doubt in the light of events depicted in contemporary history. Following this line of argument, the inscription appears[8] to be dated not in the X but in the VII century A. D.

An old Canarese inscription in very much of a damaged state from the walls of the water-pond in front of the Muccukundesvara Temple at Kodumbàlùr[9] is also useful as giving us some insight into the attitude of the Irukkuvels towards religion. On the same matter of the Irukkuvel religion numerous inscriptions of the days of Cola imperialism give us ample knowledge, recording, as they do, the numerous and generous grants of members of the Irukkuvel family. These inscriptions oftentimes mention also the offical designation of the donor, thus giving us an opportunity also to evaluate the Irukkuvel position in the official life of the country.[10]

Literary Sources: Numerous early peoms belonging to the Sangam period mention very important facts concerning the vel (velir) families in general.[11] They mention, in particular, many occasions when these chieftains were defeated at the hands of the Cola, Pandya, and the Cera kings.[12] These details, though minute in

8. See *Infra* for a detailed discussion on this question.

9. A. R. E. 1907-08, P. 80.

10. See *infra.*

11. Puram, 24, 105, 120, 141; Agam, 36, 115, 135, 262 etc. It is presumed in this thesis that the age of these poems is between the I and III century A. D., in other words that the age of the Sangam is, as it is generally accepted, the II century A. D.

12. Pattinappalai, 11, 274ff, Maduraikkanji, 1.55; Patirruppattu, 1.40 etc.

themselves, yield useful basis for valuable conclusions, regarding, in particular, the Irukkuvel rise to power. Two poems of the *Purananuru* collection, Nos. 201 and 202 attributed to Poet Kapilar are of invaluable help in tracing the origin of these chieftains. On the same subject, the earlier work, *Tolkappiyam*, and its even more valuable commentary by Naccinarkiniyar are also of great value.

The value of these poems for the reconstruction of the social history of the period cannot be exaggerated, since they are descriptions of social conditions at first hand, as some one said, "transcripts from actual life." If we could make reasonable allowance for exaggeration with which poets are wont to describe, they can be considered as the best sources for the reconstruction of the social history of any period, for the poet alone is, to use the words of Kalhana, "capable of making vivid the life of a by-gone age and of creations which are delightful and true."[13] From the hands of these Tamil poets we have a fund of interesting material, vignettes of different aspects of social life, which can be pressed into useful service.

Tradition: The present history has also a few references to make to tradition as embodied in the Baramahal Records, Taylor's *Oriental Mss.*, Mackenzie Collections, the North Arcot Manual and the Madras Administrative Reports, besides the Ceylon Chronicles, the *Mahawamsa* and the *Deepavamsa*, most prominently in connection with the origin of the Irukkuvel Chieftains. I have dealt with all these with the care and judiciousness of an earnest investigator.

13. Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, Canto I,Sl.4 (Trans. by Pandit Ranjit Sitaram, Allahabad, 1935.)

III

GENERAL IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

The importance of the subject arises from two sources and its interest is both of a particular and general nature. The history of the Velir chieftains deals with a period in South Indian history in which Kingship makes its first recorded beginnings, which they helped in many ways, by the supply of man-power, leadership in war and administration and diplomacy of various kinds. It is this that invests the subject of this book with a particular interest not only to students of history but also to those interested in the study of government and society in ancient South India. The investigation undertaken here will reveal this point so far as our documents would permit and in particular, with reference to nearly 1000 years of South India's history, which mark the acme of the power and influence of her indigenous kings.

The general interest of the subject is even greater, since the history of these chiefs and the other Vel families in general depicts the glories of the early history of the Vellalas, who form to-day the large majority of the well to do cultivators and zamindars of South India, of whom the Vels appear to have been the first.

There could be no two opinins on the point that these Vel families are the ancestors of the modern Vellalas. If any evidence is necessary, it is found in the common place of origin, attributable to the Véls and the Vellalas. Tradition enshrined in the Baramahal Records places the early home of the Vellalas in the Gangetic basin,[14] to which territory again other pieces of evidence

14. Baramahal Records, Sec. III (Inhabitants)

assign the early home of the Vels.[15] Further, numerous places in the south re-calling Vel connections are called Vellanmai (in Kanathurnadu), Vellar-kurichi (in Rajaraja-catur-vedimangalam), Velur (in Puralmalainadu). Velangudi (in the proximity of Tanjore) etc. without making any difference between the terms, 'Vel' and 'Velan'. Again, Vellalas largely abound to this day in the modern Madurai, Tinnevelly and Tanjore districts, which may be considered roughly as the area marked by the life and rule of the early Vel families; and one sect among them is called 'Soliyavellala', strongly reminding one of the Cola-Vel connections in early times.

If this identity of the Vel and the Vellala is accepted, the present study must be of absorbing and practical interest, since we would be studying here the origin and early history of the Vellala community, which occupies such a vital position in South Indian society to-day. The present study reveals that there ls nothing surprising in the high social position held by them to-day seeing that even as early as the days of Tolkappiyar the 'ulavar (cultivators) are placed only next to the 'arivar' (Brahmans) in social status.[16] The Vellalas claim on the authority of the Ramayana that Rama was crowned by a Vellala on the banks of the Godavari during his sojourn in that region,[17] which would imply that the Vellalas were also considered as the people nearest to the ruling houses of the times and fit even to crown kings. But even more than the evidence of the Ramayana the

15. See infra.

16, *Tolkappiyam*, Puratinai, 75.

17. Petition of the Vellalas against the Census of 1871.

history of the Vel families gives support to this view The whole of ancient literature in South India considers them as kings or as closely related to kings.[18]

Another fact which arises from the study of the Velir history is that the various castes in South India, comprehensively styled to-day as "non-Brahmans" seem to have taken their origin from one original caste of the Vellalas, The evidence of the Baramahal Records and the traditional story of the Vellala origin mentioned in the Madras Census Report and Stuart's North Arcot Manual seem to point in this direction.[19] Discounting the mythological part of the accounts found in these records, we find in them stated the origin of important castes like the merchant and shepherd castes (the "dhana vaisiyas" and the "govaisyias", as the Madras Census Report styles them) and another one "who would not have any connection with either of them, from whence they surnamed him *Agmurdi* or the alien",[20] branching off from the main trunk of the Vellalas. A certain caste called "Vellan-chettis" (a sub-division of Soliyavellalas),

18. See Comment of Naccinarkiniyar on *Tolkappiyam* Aham sutra 30. The Sangam poems always refer to them as kings and some of them also refer to the marriages of two Cera kings in Velir family (*Patirrupattu*, padigam 4, 6, & 8). The same comment on *Tolkappiyam* mentions Karikala's marriage with Nankur Vel. The Muvarkovil Inscription at Kodumbalur refers to the marriage of Samarabhirama to a Cola princess called Anupama (A. R E. 1907-08 pp. 81–82), while several inscriptions of the time of Parantaka II Sundaracola (287 of 1911; S. I. I., III, 113; E. I., XX, p. 63; 273 of 1903 etc.) speak of Velir ladies in high social status. An inscription of a late Pandya ruler, Ativiraramapandyasrivallabha (C. 1565 A. D.) calls him Alagansilavel (T. A. S. I, 56, 105; see also 509 of 1909)

19. Baramahal Records, Sec. III (Inhabitants); Madras Census Report, 1891; Stuart's manual, p. 210.

20. Baramahal Records; Loc., cit.

which is found largely in the modern Trichinopoly and Tanjore districts[21] further supports this argument.

A third important fact evolving from this study is the northern origin of the Vels. All the evidence leading to this conclusion have been set forth in their proper place in the body of this work.[22] This taken together with the thesis above substantiated viz., that most of the important castes of South India are mere branches from the Vellala caste, seems to give a lead in the matter of determining the origin of the whole of the Dravidian race.

21, Madras Census Report, 1901

22. See *infra*.

PART ONE

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE VELLAR BASIN

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN OF THE VELS

I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The question of the origin of the Vels is interesting and intriguing; interesting, because a decision on this matter would fix the origin of the Vellalas (a decision of current interest); intriguing, because the evidence at our disposal is so conflicting and confusing.

In the discussion that follows it is proposed to present ony the salient points in our evidence, so that the argument may not be clouded.

1. The Vels are the originators of the Vellalas.[1] We Shall proceed in our argumentation first with the known facts regarding the origin of the Vellalas. Tradition enshrined in the Baramahal Records[2] gives a mythical account of the origin of the Vellalas, which tells us that the divine pair, Parvati and Siva, produced

1. This fact has been well established in the previous chapter. Mr. V. Kanakasabhai, the great poineer of researches in South Indian History, states in his *Tamils 1800 Years Ago* (p. 106) that the Vel chieftain, Mavel Aye belonged to the "tribe of the Vellalas"; and Mr. Gopinatha Rao concurs with him in this view (T. A. S., No. 1, p. 3.)

2. Baramahal Records, Sec. III.

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from the mother earth (Bhudevi) a semi-divine person called Bhumi Palakudu to chastise the divine architect, Visvakarma, who had intruded on their privacy. Now, this chastiser is said to have risen from the bowels of the earth on the banks of the Ganges "holding in his hand a golden ploughshare and his neck encircled with garlands of flowers."[3] Thus was born, according to this account, the progenitor of the Vellalas. The Madras Census Report for 1891 mentions another traditional story regarding their origin:

> "Many thousands of years ago, when the inhabitants of the world were rude and ignorant of agriculture, a severe drought fell upon the land and the people prayed to Bhudevi, the goddess of the earth, for aid. She pitied them and produced from her body a man carrying a plough, who showed them how to till the soil and support themselves. His offspring are the Vellalas, who aspire to belong to the vaisiya caste........."[4]

By an analysis of these accounts the following conclusions can be arrived at regarding the origin of the Vellalas:

(*a*) That the Vellalas arose as an agricultural caste—to teach men "how to till the soil and support themselves"

(*b*) That their original home lies in the Gangetic basin.

and (*c*) That they belong to the Vaisya caste.

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3. Baramahal Records, Loc., cit.

4. The same story is found in Stuart's N. Arcot Manual, p. 210.

II

THE GANGETIC ORIGIN

That the Ganges basin is the early home of the Vellalas was the current belief in India as early as the 2nd century A. D. is seen from the evidence of Pliny and Ptolemy, who mention a family of Vellalas in the Deccan, called 'Gangavida' as a powerful tribe, which must be obviously a variant of the term, 'Gangavidu' (the house of the Ganges)[5]

Other facts of early Vellala history do, besides, show that the Greek writers were not mistaken. We have early records, in which the Vels call themselves as the 'Gangakula' or the 'Gangavamsa.'[6] The Puranas and the Epics, particularly the Mahabharata tell us that in early days when the Vels increased in number in the Ganges territory, Lord Krishna removed them from there into a strong fort, which he had raised for them at Dwaraka (in Gujarat) to protect them from the onslaughts of the Rakshasas.[7] The Tamil work, *Tondamandalasadakam* says[8] that the early Cola king, Karikala the Great, brought a number of Sudra families from the Gangetic valley, settled them in the 24 kottams (districts of Tondamandalam) and bestowed on them rich gifts. This statement is further clarified by the comment of the learned editor of the work, who says that these were mostly Vellalas, who were born in the valley of the Ganges and known on that

5. Quoted by Thurston, *Castes and Tribes,* VII, p. 388.

6. See M. Raghava Aiyengar, *Velirvaralaru* p. 21.

7. Ibid, p. 7; See also *Vyasabharatam* (ed. by M. V. Ramanujachariar) *Sabhaparvam*, Chap. XIV.

8. *Tondamandalasadakam*, stanza, 97.

account as the 'Gangakula.'[9] That this belief in the Ganges home persisted strongly even as late as the XI and the XII century A. D. is evidenced by the fact that a family of the Vels, who ruled from Orissa during this period is known in most of its records as belonging to the 'Gangavamsa'[10] These testimonies concur in determining the Ganges valley as the cradle of the Vel infancy. Edmund Thurston, who has valiantly laboured in the study of the origin and development of the various castes and tribes of India, adduces several practices of the Vellalas as reminding one of their northern origin.[11] One of these practices may be mentioned here in passing to show the nature of the proof advanced by Thurston. It is the ceremony, popularly called in the south as 'Vilakidu-kalyanam', in which young girls of the seventh and the ninth years are made to light a lamp, decorated for the purpose, as a mark of respect to god Agni, who is then prayed to light the path of the young girl. This is a ceremony unique among the Vellalas alone strongly reminding one of the Agni cult of the Aryans. Innumerable traces exist of vast and successive immigrations of a northern race of cultivators, herdsmen and warriors into the south, who first carried devastation among the tribes of the south and in course of time got united with them as one people. The Mackenzie Mss are full of such references.

III

THE KRISHNA LEGEND

Among the numerous legends that surround the name of Lord Krishna the one that connects him with the

9. See comment on stanza 97, *Tondamandalasadakam*.

10. See Thurston, Op. cit., p. 368.

11. Ibid, p. 380, 387 etc.

early life of the Vels is highly instructive in the matter of the Vel origin. It has been already pointed out that Lord Krishna protected the Vels in a fort in Dwaraka from the attack of the Rakshasas.[12] Further evidence reveals the fact that Lord Krishna was believed from very early times not only as the protector but as the progenitor as well of the Vels. That this was the well-received notion of the people even in the days of Naccinarkiniyar, the learned commentator of the *Tolkappiyam*, is seen from his comment to the preface of this great work. In the course of this he makes a reference to Agastiya's advent into the south, in which connection he mentions the Vels as belonging to the family of Lord Krishna.

The following is the extract from the comment bearing on the reference in question:

> "All the gods having gathered on Mount Meru, the mount went down with their weight, and the south rose up, whereupon they chose Agastiyar as the right man to be in the south to redress its balance. The gods requesting Agastiyar, he was soon on his way to the south, when he entered into Dwaraka and took along with him 18 kings and 18 families of Vels and Aruvalar of the progency of the high-crowned Lord, who measured the earth, gave them homes, having destroyed forests.........bound Ravana (from mischief) and having prevented the Rakshasas from coming there, settled himself on the Podiyil (hills)" [13]

12. See *infra*; See also the cf. in the *Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion*, p. 167.

13. Tolkappiyam, Naccinarkiniyar's comment on *payiram* See also his comment on Sutra, 32 (*Venduvinai Iyarkai*). The connection between the Aruvalar mentioned in this reference and the Irukkuvel is borne out in *Pattinappatai*, 11. 274–282.

In the Srivyasabharatam (sabhaparvam), Lord Krishna himself seems to confirm the evidence of Naccinarkiniyar.[14] In this work a passage is put in the mouth of Lord Krishna as explaining to Uthishtirar a plan laid out by the Yadavas against the Rakshasa, Jarasanthan, which begins as follows :

> " O king, we were so much panic-stricken
> when Jarasanthan came on us
> that all our eighteen families joined
> together and made this plan "

Now, the evidence of this passage not merely confirms the statement of Naccinarkiniyar in general but gives a definite support to two particular facts : (1) that the families protected by Lord Krishna were 18 in number and (2) that they were Yadavas. The latter fact is even inscriptionally confirmed. The Cola-grantha inscription to which reference has already been made, mentions Samarabhirama, one of the great Irukkuvel rulers as 'yadhuvamsaketu' ("the crown of the yaduvamsa").[15] Further, a late inscription from Tirukalakudi (Ramnad Dt.) mentions the name of a donor as Tuvarapativelan of Kannamangalam in Solapandyavalanadu,[16] which recalls the Vel connection with Lord Krishna and his city, Dwaraka.

The crucial conclusion to which the above discussion drives us is the fact that the Vels were yadavas in origin —a conclusion as startling as it is inescapable. Mr. M. Srinivasa Aiyengar in his scholarly contribution to South Indian History wrote as early as 1914 that the

14. Srivyasabharatham, *sabhaparvam*, Chap. XIV.
15. A. R. E. 1907–08, p. 87.
16. 36 of 1916.

early classification of Tamil tribes is "conspicuous by the absence of the velir or Vellala caste"[17] that in the fourfold distinction of land that obtained in ancient South India each of which was inhabited by a particular caste the Vellalas do not find mention.[18] This is not to say that the Vellalas were non-existent in the south at the time when this classification was current, since in the oldest grammer yet known, viz., the *Tolkappigam* the Vels are referred to as already pointed out.[19] The only conclusion that follows is that the Vels ought to have been merged in one of these four castes here adumbrated; and the Krishna-Vel connection above set forth seems to underline that the Vels were at first considered to be Idayar (yadavas). It is also to the point to refer here to Prof. V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar of the Madras University, who in a learned paper contributed to the Oriental Conference of 1937 on the Aye chieftain calls the Vels as "the Tamil tribe of the Yadavas."[20]

A doubt in this discussion is to be dispelled. This point is fundamental, namely the answer to the question, who is Lord Krishna. Is he god or incarnation of god, a semi-divine person or merely a tribal hero, who attained to such fame by his achievements as to be sung in an epic like the Mahabharata? There are supporters for every one of these views. After a careful study

17. M. Srinivasa Aiyengar, *Tamil Studies*, p. 63.

18. The fourfold classification here referred to is *Neytal* (paravar), *Mullai* (Idayar), *Marudam* (Mallar) and *Kurinji* (kuravar). The *Palai* is omitted as unimportant.

19. Tolkappiyam (*Solladikaram*), sutra, 395 mentioning the important kingdoms in the south mentions the Vel kingdom also as one among them.

20. Travancore Oriental Conference Proceedings, p. 693.

of the whole question Prof. R. G. Bhandarkar arrives at the conclusion that Lord Krishna must have been merely a tribal hero, "who attains to divinity long after his death by the reverential worship of his own tribesmen, in which connection a body of doctrines might have grown up."[21] In a thoroughly learned article contributed by Prof. Jacobi to the Encyclopoedia of Religion and Ethics he states that Lord Krishna was perhaps "a crafty Rajput chief who is not over-scrupulous in his choice of means for accomplishing his ends."[22]

The first mention of Lord Krishna's name in the whole range of Hindu literature is in the Chandogya Upanishad, where he is mentioned as a sage, a wise man enquiring into the highest of truths, the son of Devaki to whom Ghora Angviasa imparts a particular piece of secret knowledge.[23] This seems to point in the direction of the conclusions, refered to.[24] It would thus appear that Lord krishna must have been a wise and powerful chieftain of the distant past, who making most of the unsettled conditions of the times must have established himself as the tribal hero of the Yadavas.

"After Krishna gets identified as the tribal hero of the Yadavas Baladeva comes to be regarded as his brother." (R. G. Bhandarkar)[25] This statement of Prof. Bhandarkar

21. Bhandarkar, *Report on the search of Sanskrit MSS.*, p. 74.

22. Jacobi's article on Incarnation, Encyclopoedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VII, p. 196.

23. Chandogya Upanishad, III, xvii 6; see also Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, IV, p. 258.

24. The heterodox view held that Lord Krishna was merely a mythical hero ought to be dismissed in the light of the above references.

25. Bhandarkar, op. cit., p. 74.

reveals another pertinent fact that emphasises the Krishna-Vel relationship. It is a known fact that Baladeva is always mentioned in the Puranas and for that matter in all Hindu literature, religious and profane, as the god of the cultivator and is represented in them as 'hali' (the person with the plough).[26] Now, this unification of Krishna and Baladeva as brothers indicates the connection between the Yadavas and the Vels as forming one group, each section having its particular hero. As though to emphasise further the close unity between the two sections the Puranas indeed circulate a story that though Balarama was born of Rohini, "he was first conceived by Devaki (Krishna's mother) from whose womb he was latterly transferred in embryo to that of Rohini."[27] The same idea is sought to be further confirmed by the Visnu Purana, which narrates the "incident of God Narayana sending down two of his hairs, a white one and a black one, into the womb of Devaki, which in time are born as Balarama (the white one) and Krishna (the black one) for the destruction of Kamsa."[28]

The fore-going discussion ought to speak for itself in the matter of relationship of the Vels with Lord Krishna. It will amply clarify the position, if the date of Lord Krishna can be fixed. In the midst of the unsettled chronology of early Indian history, one circumstance at least is clear with regard to the period of Krishna, that he must have lived after the period of Sri Rama, since the Mahabharata, which deals with the life and deeds of

26. Muir, op. loc., cit.

27. Jacobi, op. cit., p. 195.

28. Muir, op. cit., loc. cit.

Lord Krishna mentions Sri Rama and the other heroes appearing in the Ramayana as those of a past age.[29] Though the age of the Ramayana itself has not yet been placed beyond doubt, it is reasonable to surmise that it could not have been earlier than the 7th century B.C. at which date the southern migration of the Aryans is roughly placed.[30] John Dowson in his Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion places the date of the Ramayana in the 5th century B. C.[31] Thus it is possible to assume 7th century B.C. as the lower limit of Lord Krishna's period. Surprisingly enough, Panini, the early Sanskrit grammarian, whom the general consensus of scholarly opinion places in the the 7th century B.C.[33] mentions in his work the various heroes of the Mahabharata war, thus making us conclude that the age of Krishna ought to hover round about the 7th century B.C.

IV

THE GREAT WITNESS: THE EVIDENCE OF KAPILAR

A very welcome light on the whole subject of the Vel-origin and in particular on the origin of the Irukkuvel comes from a poem of Kapilar, the Sangam poet, addresed to the Irukkuvel chieftain at Arayam (in modern Mysore).[33] The poem is addressed to the chieftain

29. The Mahabharata indeed relates Sri Rama's adventure separately in a long episode, entitled 'Ramopakhiyana'.

30. Dikshitar, *Tamil Studies*, p. 125, F. N. 1 The Ramayana is now considered by many writers as an allegorical representation of the Aryan conquest of the south—See, for ex., Frazer, *A Literary History of India*, p. 30.

31. Dowson, *Classical Dictionary*, p. 261.

32. R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected works*, Vol III, p. 15.

33. Puram, 201.

requesting him to marry the daughters of Vel Pari, who having died in battle, has left them helpless. In the form of address the poet mentions three important particulars with regard to the Irukkuvel origin :

(*a*) that the first Irukkuvel came into life from the fire-pit of a northern sage

(*b*) that he ruled in Dwaraka "defended by tall forts"

(*c*) that the Irukkuvel at Arayam (to whom the poem is addressed) was of the forty-ninth generation from the first ancestor.[34]

Thus this poem, while being strongly confirmatory of the Krishna-Vel relations, makes us also understand that the Vels (though only the Irkkuvel family is here mentioned) were born-kings, who ruled from Dwaraka, roughly a thousand years before the period of the poet, which would make the period of their rule synchronise with that of Lord Krishna.[35]

34. "நீயே—வடபான் முனிவன் தடவினுட் தோன்றிச்
செப்புனைந் தியற்றிய சேணெடும் புரிசை
உவராவீகைத் துவரை யாண்டு
நாற்பத் தொன்பது வழிமுறை வந்த
வேளிருள் வேளே........." —Puram 201.

35. The period of the thousand years is calculated by roughly assigning to each generation 20 years. If Kapilar's date is granted as the 2nd. century A. D. (the age of the Sangam), this period would work out to the 8th. century B. C. It may be roughly said that this is synchronistic with the period of Lord Krishna, whom we have proved by other evidences as the first Vel hero. By arguments based on the internal evidence of the Ramayana and on the evidence of Panini we have no doubt fixed the period of Krishna round about the 7th. century B. C. But in a caculation based on rough approximation and over a period extending over 49 generations the discrepancy of even a century may, I think, be easily overlooked.

The two new facts arising from this poem are that the Irukkuvels had their origin from a fire-pit and that through the good offices of a "northern sage." The reference to the fire-pit need not be insisted upon, though writers like Dr. S. K. Aiyengar infer from this circumstance that the Vels (the Irukkuvels in particular) belonged to the 'agnikula' or "fire-race".[36] This reference found in Kapilar's poem is more a statement of mythological tradition than of actual fact.

But who could be the "northern sage" referred to in the poem? The comment of Naccinarkiniyar, to which we have already referred, seems to point to the sage Agastiya. His going to the fort at Dwaraka and taking with him 18 kings and 18 families of Vels and Aruvaler, as he was bound on his beneficent mission to the south seems to point to this.[37]

Other available pieces of evidence converge on the same conclusion. Dr. Caldwell in his Comparative Grammar says that for long after Agastya's death the Vellalas kept up the belief that he was still on the Podiyil hills presiding over their destiny,[38] a belief by no means dead to-day. The Irukkuvels, in particular, have paid many homages to the memory of that sage. The very

36. S. K. Aiyengar, *Ancient India*, p. 391.

37. The view is of course held by scholars like K. Subramaniya Pillai and K. N. Sivaraja Pillai that Agastiya was no man of flesh and blood, " but a semi-historical character, possibly allegorical."—see K. N Sivaraja Pillai, *Agastya in Tanil land*, pp. 61—63. But, obviously, this does not nullify our argument, since if Agastya is taken as an allegorigal representation of the Aryan invasion of the south as these writers concede, he must have gained a personality by the time of the Sangam and the poet Kapilar.

38. Caldwell, *Comparative Grammer,* p. 99; also pp. 114–15.

capital of the Irukkuvel dynasty in the south is called Kodumbalur, which appears as nothing but a variant of Karambalur, recalling to one's mind Karambai (near Benares, on the banks of the Ganges), the native *habitat* of Agastiya.[39] Further, the deity called Agastyeswara which adorns a temple of the same name within the confines of the ancient Irukkuvel kingdom reminds one of this Vel connection with the sage Agastiya.[40]

If the Tamils have it as their favourite belief that Agastiya was living to this day, invisibly though, on the Podiyil hills watching over their destiny, we have references in the Sangam poems to the particular devotion of the Vels to the Podiyil hills. Thus the poet, Ollaiyur-tanda Bhutapandiyan refers to Titiyan, one of the Velir chieftains, as "Podiyirselvan."[41]

V

ROYAL KINSMEN

Our discussion on the origin of the Vels has led us to the following conclusions :

(*a*) That the Vels have their original home in the Gangetic valley, to which their connection with Agastiya would also point.

(*b*) That the Vels claim Lord Krishna as their progenitor.

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39. The Epics and the Puranas speak of Agastiya as the native of Karambai on the banks of the Ganges "going to that river in very slow steps in his wooden sandals carefully avoiding the pebbles of lingams, as they are strewn all over the streets of Benares"—Q.J.M.S., XVII, p. 171.

40. P. II., No. 25.

41. Agam, 25.

This last conclusion points to further relations between the Vels on the one hand and the Hoysalas on the other as forming members of the Yadu family (the family of the Yadavas).

Striking testimony is borne to the Vel-Hoysala connection by the succeeding lines of the same poem of Kapilar above referred to, in which the Irukkuvel chieftain in Arayam is addressed as "the slayer of the tiger."[42] This epithet when read in conjunction with the very current Hoysala tradition of Sala killing the tiger' that came to disturb the prayers of the yadhi in the Vasantakadevi Temple at Sosevur[43] seems to point to the Irukkuvel king sung by the poet as none other but the first king of the Hoysalas, Sala, the slayer of the tiger, a name immersed in the mists of antiquity. This ruler has actually remained unidentified but for vague opinions like that of Mr. Hyavadana Rao, the Editor of the Mysore Gazetteer, who says that this Sala must have been a Jain,[44] which is not very enlightening. The poem of Kapilar under reference throws a flood of welcome light on the subject. The circumstance that the Irukkuvel addressed by Kapilar was the king of Arayam in Mysore further confirms this identification.

If further evidence in support of this identification is at all necessary, the common Hoysala name, Ballala, the name of a province like Gangavadi, and the name of

42. "புலிகடிமால்" Puram, 201. The same is referred to in Puram 202 also.

43. See Mysore Gazetteer, II, ii, p. 1310; also many inscriptions like Chickmagalur, 20, 137; Belur, 171; See E.C. V, Intro. p. 10.

44. Mysore Gazetteer, Loc., cit.

a city like Dwarsamudra furnish further proofs in point. The Hoysala name 'Ballala' is only a variant of the Tamil 'Vellala'; while names like Gangavadi and Dwarasamudra are reminiscent of the period of the Vel orgin, of the Ganges basin and Dwaraka. It must be noted that Dwarasamudra was for long the Hoysala capital; and when circumtances forced the Hoysalas to found a new capital, they called it 'Belur', which is nothing but a Canarese rendering of the Tamil name 'Velur'. In fact, the Canarese work *Kavi-kantha-hara* calls Belur 'Velanagari'[45] (the city of the Vellalas)

Certain references in the Sangam poems to the Vel king as Vel Andiran[46] make it plausible that the Vels were in some way connected with the Andhras also. Various place names in the Andhra country like Veluru, Velvunuru, Velagampadu etc. seem to confirm this conclusion further.[47]

Pandit M. Raghava Aiyengar in his *Velirvaralaru* seeks to relate the Vels to the Chalukyas as well.[48] Available sources of evidence, however, do not seem to support this view. Bis reference to the *Pingalandai* and the *Deevakaram*, which equate the term, 'Vel' with 'salukku' is the foundation of his argument. On the one hand, these works, however authoritative, are late compositions and, on the other, the identification of the term, 'salukku', with the term, 'chalukya', cannot be put beyond doubt. Besides, the Chalukya claim to Ayodhya as

45. E,C., V, Intro. p. xxxiii.

46. Puram, 136, 240, 374 etc., *Narrinai*, stanza, 237.

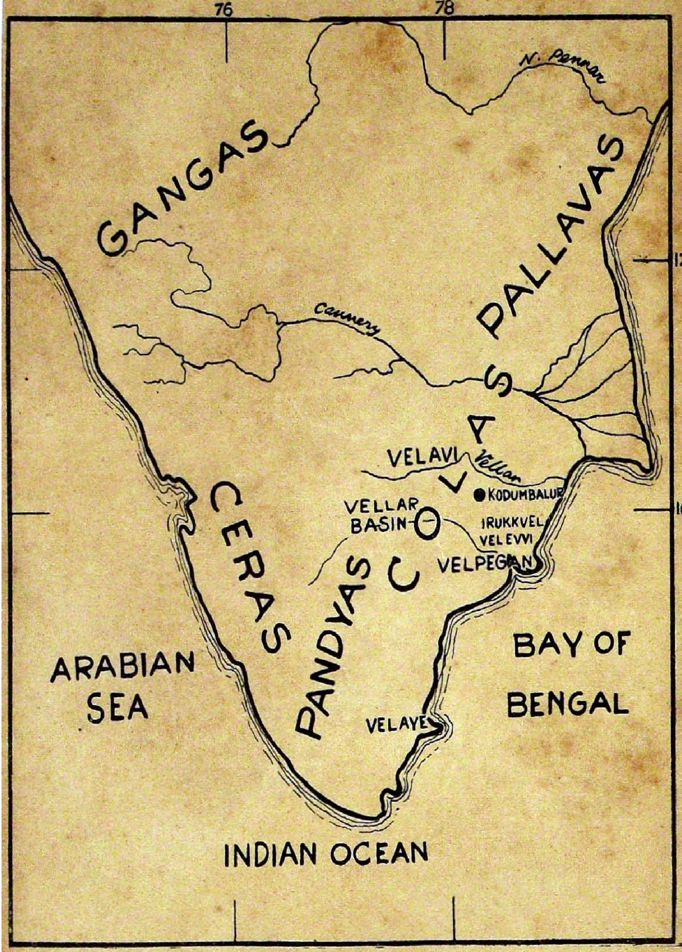
47. See *infra* for a further discussion on this subject.

48. Raghava Aiyengar, *Velirvaralaru*, p.p. 8—12,

their original home[49] and the opinion of Dr. Fleet,[50] however discredited it may be to-day, that the Chalukya home lay in the Gurjara country, militate against the view of Mr. Raghava Aiyengar.

49. I. A., XVI, p. 21 ; V, p. 17 etc.

50. Bombay Gazetteer, I, ii, p. 339.



South India showing the early Vel settlements and the Vellar Basin

CHAPTER II

THE VELS AT THE DAWN OF HISTORY

I

CHRONOLOGY OF THE EARLY VELS

The two poems of Kapilar to which reference has been made in the last chapter fix the earliest possible date of the Vels towards the close of the 8th century B.C.[1] Now, the latest limit of the early Velir chronology must be round about the 2nd or 3rd century A.D., as may be inferred from the refrences in the Sangam poems,[2] This ought to be so, because these poems depict a condition of Vel prosperity, that has well passed the state of nonage. They disclose the existence of at least six families of Vels, besides the Irukkuvels in a well-settled and flourishing condition.[3] They are the Vel Aye, the Vel Avi, the Vel Pegan, the Vel Evvi, the Vel Pari and Nannam Venman. Each. family is described as a ruling house. The Vel Aye as the greatest of them all governed a kingdom extending from the Podiyil hills (in the modern Tinnevelly Dt.) down to modern Travancore; Avi was the king of Pothini[4] (in the modern

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1. See before p. 31

2. Agam, 73, 77, 98, 126, 152 etc., Puram, 13, 24, 141 etc., Patirruppattu, 71 etc., ete.

3. Ibid.

4. One authoritative Tamil Dictionary of names, the *Abhidanakosam*, places Pothini roughly in the Pandya country; see p. 320.

Madurai Dt.) Pegan was his neighbour king and was known as the great donor of the Sangam age; Evvi ruled over the territory of Milalaikurram[5] (part of the modern Tanjore Dt.) adjoining the modern Pudukottah State; Pari's kingdom lay in Parambunad within the Pandyan limits;[6] and Nannam Venman's in Palkunrakottam in Thondainadu.[7] The Irukkuvel chieftain is mentioned during this period in Arayam (in modern Mysore State) in the poems of Kapilar already mentioned.

II

THE DATE OF THE SOUTHERN MIGRATIONS

A definite clue in this direction is given by the association of the sage Agastiya with the southern migration of the Vels, which would make them roughly synchronise with the Aryan invasion of South India (popularly placed in the 7th century B.C.), sincc Agastiya has always been considered (as has been already said) as the precursor of this invasion. "He represents" says Rew. O.C. Ganguly, "and stands for the concrete symbol of the adventurous spirit of the early Aryans, who have ever sought 'fresh fields and pastures new' for the colonisation and development of Aryan thought".[8] In

5. See K. A. N. Sastri, *Pandyan Kingdom* pp. 28, 29, also F. N. on p. 29. Prof. Sastri, is of opinion that Milalaikurram was "apparently in the modern district of Tanjore." Researches made in this study place it more definitely in the old Pudukottah State. See contra K. V. S. Iyer, *Sketches* pp. 115 ff

6. See *Infra.*

7. See *infra*

8. Ganguly, Q.J.M.S., XVII, p. 170.

the epic Ramayana, which is represented by some writers as an allegory of the southern penetration of this Aryan thought and civilisation,[9] there is frequent reference to Sri Rama visiting places made safe for him by the sage Agastya",[10] which further confirms the view of Rev. Ganguly. The date of this epic would therefore furnish a second limiting consideration in fixing the date under discussion. We have already referred to the view of Dowson, who places the date of the Ramayana in the 5th century B.C.[11] Prof. Hermann Jacobi, on the other hand, places the lowest limit of the date of the composition of the epic in the 6th century B.C.[12] It therefore appears reasonable to place the events of the epic at the latest a century earlier than the 6th century B.C. This 7th century date for the events of the Ramayana also agrees well with the date generally accepted for the Aryan invasion of the south.[13] Further, this as the period of the Ikshavakuide prosperity with the petty state polity and the patriarchal state of society seems to agree very well with the descriptions, social, and political found in the epic. Thus the date of the earliest migrations of the Vels into the south is to be placed in the VII century B.C.

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9. Frazer, op. cit., loc., cit.

10. Ramayana, III, ii, 85; VII, iii, 81 etc. In the *Lankakandam*, LXVII, 13—14 Sri Rama is said to exclaim, "I killed Ravana and have won and recovered thee, o, Sita, even as the sage Agastiya won and reclaimed the inaccessible southern regions".

11. See *Supra*.

12. Jocobi, *Das Ramayana*, Introduction.

13. The VII century date is already established; See *Supra*.

III

TWO SEPARATE FAMILIES

The first reference, however, which we get in South Indian records to these Vel families in the south is only in the II or III century A. D., namely in the Sangam works, though earlier references are found to the Vèls in general and the Velnadu in particular in works like the *Tolkappiyam*,[14] assigned roughly to the V or the IV century B. C.[15]

Several reasons may be adduced this long silence of the chronicler or historian, if ever there was one of that description in early South India. The first is that no one could say that all our early records have come into our hands. The very poems of the Sangam age were largely unknown half a century ago. How many a gem of this useful collection have perished beyond recall is what we cannot compute, though there could be no doubt that many of our early poems have been lost tous. This must furnish one reason for the apparently long silence, that seems to cover the Vl history in the south.

Another and more powerful argument is to be found in the Tamil hatred for the men of the north, whom they contemptuously called, '*vadukar*' and whom they tried their best to stop beyond their borders. That this was so even as late as the period of the Sangam is clearly borne out from numerous poems of the period, which are only too full of references to this, which we would now term as

14. See before

V. R. R. Dikshitar, *Oriental Conference Proceedings*, Travancore, p. 691.

unhealthy spirit.[16] All but few of the Tamil kings of the period were themselves in the van of this crusade against the "north-men".[17] They are said to have sometimes entered into the very camp of the '*vadukar*', pillaging and carrying away their cattle.[18] The spirit which the Tamil poems portray is a great anti-northern spirit, which had to be surmounted with difficulty even by the most powerful invaders from the north. The failure of an Acoka to establish his sway in the south in the period a little earlier to this and the failure of a Samudragupta in the period a little later to this explain the same difficulty. And when we remember the long period that separates Acoka and Samudragupta, the period of roughly seven centuries, we would understand how strong, long-standing and diehard was this anti-northern feeling in the Tamil mind. If yet another proof is necessary to bear out this argument, it is to be found in the little or no notice that the Pallavâs, who succeeded in establishing their power in the south for well nigh seven centuries, get at the hands of the Tamil poets of the period. Even the later-day manuscripts collected by Col. Mackenzie is silent about them.[19]

History actually bears evidence to the fact that the earliest Vellalas who entered the south were brought there by the good offices of a few broad-minded kings, whom

16. Puram 378; Agam, 336, 375; Narrinai, 170 etc.

17. Ibid; see also S. K. Aiyengar, *Contributions of S. India*, p. 161.

18. Ibid.

19. It is assumed here that the Pallavas were also northerners. The theory that they were indigenous to the south instead of miliatting against our argument only suffers by this clear omission in the Sangam poems.

fortunately no age fails to produce. The reference in the *Pattinappalai*, which mentions Karikala's conquest of the Dakshinapatha which he distributed among the Vellala chiefs from the north is well-known to all students of South Indian history.[20] The Mackenzie Mss. give us a detailed description of Adondai's conquest of the Kurumbar country (in which the intervention of the very god Siva is not omitted), which he peopled with Vellalas from the north and T[illegible]desam (Canarese country).[21] A palm-leaf manuscript in the possession of Tekkatur Subramania Velar in Pudukottah state, speaking of the Vellalas settled there makes us understand that the same Adondai brought them from Conjeevaram; while the Pandya king, Ugraperuvaludi, selected 48,000 "good families of Vellalas" and imported them from east Conjeevaram into the Pandya country. The same record further informs us that the territory occupied by the first group was called 'ko-nadu', comprising the tract from Uraiyur (in Trichinopoly) to Solavandan (in Madura Dt.) and that occupied by the second group was called 'kanadu' extending from Madura down to Tondi and Kalaiyarkoil in the south.[22]

If references to the Vels are scarce in records of early South Indian history, it is much more so in the case of the Irukkuvels. Thus for example in the Sangam literature

20. I. A. XLI, p. 149; see also Sewell's *Antiquities*, I, 174. The subjection of the *'kurumbar'* is here referred to. They are represented by historians as the people who lived in the territory covered by the region of modern Tirupathi.

21. Taylor's *Mss.* pp. 82–83.

22. Found in the *General History of the Pudukottah eStat* p. 56.

itself references to the Irukkuvel chieftain are few in comparison with refereuces to the other Vel chieftains found in the same source. Besides the poems of Kapilar already discussed there are only two other references to the Irukkuvel and on both occasions he is pictured in defeat along with a few others of his circle at the hands of the great Karikala at Venni and at the hands of Pandyan Nedunjeliyan at Talayalankanam.[23] The plausible conclusion to which one is led from this is that the Irrukkuvels had not established themselves in the far south at the time of the Sangam poets (to which the presence of the Irukkuvel chieftain at Arayam at the time of Kapilar also definitely points) and that they were perhaps the last of the Vel families to penetrate the frontiers of the south that had been for long formidable if not inaccessible for those from the North of India. This is further strengthened by the Muvarkovil Record of Bhuti Vikramakesari, which speaks of a long period of glorious rule of these chieftains at Kodumbalur, as we shall see, at least 2 centuries after the Vel heroes sung by the bards of the Sangam times. This leads to a second line of argument by which we may have to differentiate the Irukkuvels from the earlier Vels as members of two different families or clans. The subsequent history of the Irukkuvels in Kodumbalur seems to underline this conclusion, since with reference to their period of rule, continuity, achievements and in fact from every point of view the picture

23. *Pattinappalai*, 274–82; *Maduraikkanji*, 55 and the comment thereon.

24. That there were differences of family among the various Vel chieftains is an understandable fact. The comments of Naccinarkiniyar on Tolkappiyam (*payiram*) already referred to and on *Pattinappalai*, 282 undoubtedly give a lead in the matter.

given to us by the later history of the Irukkuvel chieftain is a picture with a real difference in comparison with that painted for us by the Sangam poet about the chieftains of the earlier period.[24]

IV

THE ROUTE OF SOUTHERN MIGRATIONS

Granting that the Vels migrated from the north to the south through a long period extending from the VII century B. C., the date of the Agastiyan migration, to a period later than the II or III century A. D., is it possible to trace the probable route of their migrations?

The sacred books and chronicles of the Buddhists throw a kindly light on this question. They point to at least three ways of approach from north to south in Buddha's time.[25] The route from Sravasti in North Kosala to Alaka in the kingdom of Assaka on the banks of the Godavari is the first route, through which the Brahman ascetic, Bavari, is said to have travelled to set up his monastery on the banks of that river according to the Bavari legend. The second route started from the west of Adzeitta ran parallel to the east coast through Uruvelta, in the vicinity of Bodhgaya on to Suvama, a route through which the Burmese merchant brothers, Tapisa and Palaka, are said to have travelled after transferring their merchandise from their ships into carts hired at Adzeitta. The third route ran from Mathura in the north to a sea-port on the coast of Tinnevelly, which was used, according to legend, by the marriage party of the

25. See article by Rev. T. Foulkes, I. A. XVI, p. 49.

Pandyan king, whose daughter was married to Vijaya King of Ceylon.

If the Vels had come from Dwaraka in Gujarat, which has been already proved, they must have mostly taken the first route, that ran down from Sravasti, catching further down the route running from Mathura to the sea-port on the coast of Tinnevelly. Indeed this seems to have been the best known route from north to south in the early days of which we are speaking. "The most famous route reaching the west coast," writes Rev. Foulkes, "was the one from Sravasti to Supparaka, a sea-port on the west coast. Buddha himself is said to have travelled this way with his retinue to visit Punna, one of his first south Indian converts in his hermitage near Supparaka".[26] This statement of the learned writer emphasises the fact that the Sravasti route was a common and much used way between the north and the south.

Now, the Vel route can be traced with some probability. Having left Dwaraka, the immigrants must have crossed the Vindhyas along the coast and reached the Maharashtra, from where, following the course of the Godavari and reaching the country, which we now call Andhradesa, they must have gone further south through the route running down from Mathura to Tinnevelly.

The following is the external evidence in support of the probability of this route:

(*a*) Havel in his *Aryan Rule in India* says:
" The Aryan route seems to have lain through the Avanti country, the southernmost town of

26. Foulkes, op. cit., loc., cit.

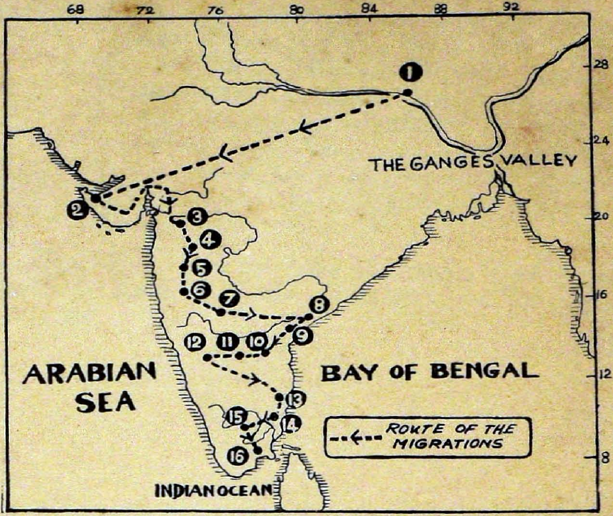
which was Mahissati or Mandhata on the Narmada, from where they crossed the Vindhyas and penetrated South India from Vidharba Mulaka country with its principal town of Paithan to Arnaka i.e., the Godavari territory, from where through Raichur and Chitaldrug into Madura district".[27] If, as has been proved it is accepted that the Aryan invasion followed in the wake of Agastiya (and therefore of Vel) migration, then this route traced for the former by Mr. Havel, a writer of great authority in the matter of the Aryan invasion, is to be taken as a confirmation of the finding independently arrived at with regard to the Vel migration.

(*b*) Both Tamil literature and tradition are agreed on the point that the route taken by Agastiya in his southern march lay *via* the Vindhya mountain which he is said to have ordered to sink down to give him an easy passage.[28]

(*c*) The third line of argument is even more convincing. The evidence of a string of places that are reminiscent of the Vels right from Kathiawar and Cutch to the banks of the Godavari and from there into the Tamil country seems to be an unerring proof in point. Thus from the many villages called 'bela' in Kathiawar and Cutch one passes along the route identified as the Vel route a number of places like Velapuram (Ahmednagar Taluk), Velur (the famous name

27. Havel, *Aryan Rule p,* 21.

28. See K. Subrahmania Pillai, op. cit; loc. cit.; also *Abhidanakosam.*



Map of India showing the route of the early Vel Migration

1. VARANASI
2. DWARAKA
3. VELUR
4. PAITHAN
5. VELARPURAM
6. VELAGAM
7. VELAPURAM
8. VELURU
9. VELVUNURU
10. VELAGAMPADU
11. VELAKURICHI
12. VELMAKURU
13. PERUVELUR
14. PULLIRUKKU VELUR
15. VELAN KUDI
16. KODUMBALUR

Ellora is itself a later-day corruption of Velur),[29] Velagam (Poona Dt.) Velapuram again (Sholapur Division), Velahisti (Andhra country), Velagampadu (Kalahasti Taluk), Velvenuru (modern Velpuru in Guntur Dt.) Velmakuru (Anantapur Dt.), Velakurichi (Cuddapah Dt.), Veluru (North Arcot Dt.) Peruvelur, Kilvelur, Pullirukkuvelur (Tanjore Dt.)[30] and Velvidudi (Madurai Dt.)

The whole country from the south bank of the Godavari down to Nellore is even to-day known as 'Velnadu'.

29. Bombay Gazetteer Vol. I, ii, p. 391.

30. R. P. Sethu Pillai, *Urum Perum:* Pullurukuvelur.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY VELS IN THE SOUTH

I

SIX PROMINENT FAMILIES

The six families of early Vel rulers to whom reference has already been made[1] are the first of the great Vel progeny in the south with whom the historian has first to deal. This is not to say either that there were no earlier Vel rulers in South India or even these were the only families of the Vel house that were ruling in South India at this period, namely the II century A. D. The Sangam poems themselves speak of a Vel chieftain called Alundur-vel, who is said to have given his daughter in marriage to Uruvapaherer Ilanjetcenni,[2] and of another, the Nankurvel, whose daughter the great Karikala is said to have married,[3] though for want of further references to them either in literature or tradition we are unable to assess their actual position in the politics of the times.

Since any detailed study of these early families is beside the scope of this work, I shall content myself in

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1. The six families like the Vel Aye, the Vel Evvi etc mentioned in the last chapter.

2. Puram 10, 203

3. Tolkappiyam, *Porul* (*aham*), sutra 30. Mr. K. V. S. Iyer in his *Sketches* identifies Alundur with Tiruvalundur near Mayavaram and Nankur with Kil-nankur in the modern Shiyali Taluk, see his *Sketches* pp. 194-95.

giving here a few, thumb-nail sketches, that would keep us in the proper perspective with regard to our study of the Irukkuvel history.

The Vel Aye was the greatest of them all. Mr. K. N. Sivaraja Pillai in his *Chronology of the Ancient Tamils* contends that he was really the equal of any of the "three crowned kings of South India".[4] His territory seems to have extended from Tinnevelly to Travancore (using modern terminology).[5] It is interesting to note that the same hills supposed in tradition to have become the final home of the sage Agastiya is ascribed to this chieftain as the centre of his dominion. His capital seems to have been in Aykudi,[6] easily identifiable with the place of the same name near Tenkasi in Tinnevelly Dt.

He is praised in Sangam literature as one of the seven great donors of the period.[7] Poets of the age like Ennicceri Mudamosiyar of Uraiyur, Odaikkilar of Turaiyur, Kuttuvan Kiranar, Parankorranar, Paranar and Karikannanar are some among the numerous donees at his hands.[8] The poet Mudamosiyar who seems to have had the largest share of Aye'e bounty tells us that there was nothing which his patron would be unwilling to give in charity.[9] From other references in the Sangam poems

4. *Chronology of the Ancient Tamils*, p. 66.

15. Mc. Crindle, *Anc. India* p. 134; K. A. N. Sastri, *Pandyan Kingdom* p. 56; K. V. S. Iyer, op. cit., p. 133.

6. Puram, 132.

7. Puram 158! see also introduction to the *Purananuru* edn. of V, Swaminatha Iyer, p. 2.

8. Puram, 127-36, 240.

9. Idid., 127, 128; 133

10. Idid., 129, 130, 135.

we understand that even elephants were not beyond the range of his charity.[10] Well may the poet sing mourning his death, "The very gods would have sounded trumpets to announce the arrival of such a donor in their kingdom".[11]

The chieftain Vel Avi was the ruler of Pothin (modern Palani, which is known even to-day as 'Avinangudi' and has a tank, which is known as 'Vayavipuri'– to-day corrupted as 'Vayapuri') Paduman seems to have been another name for this chieftain.[12] He gave two of his daughters in marriag to the two Cera kings, Neduncera-latan and Selvakadungovaliatan according to *padigams* 4, 6 and 8 of the *Patiruppattu*. The palace at Vanci called 'Velavikomalikai' refered to in *Silappadikaram*[13] reminds us of his connection with the Cera kings. The place called Aviyur a few miles from Madura in all prabablity indicates the southern extent of his dominion.

Vel Pegan is represented in the Sangam poems as of the family of Vel Aye.[14] That his territory must have lain by the side or at least very near the kingdom of Vel Avi is surmisable from this and from the evidence of *Purananuru*,[15] which while mentioning the seven great donor-chieftains in order mentions Vel Pegan just before Vel Aye.[16] A further connecting link between the two is

11. Puram, 241.

12. Compare *padigams* 4 and 6 of *Patirruppattu*.

13. *Silappadikaram*, Canto XXVIII.

14. Sirupannarruppadai, 11. 85–87; Naccinarkiniyar, comment on *Tolkappiyam;* Porul, 65.

15. Puram, 158.

16. Ibid, 11. 12–13. It is here supposad that the poet was following the order of territorial contiguity.

found in their extreme generosity. The poets of the age describe the benevolence and the charity of the two almost in like terms.[17] As Vel Aye is said to have made a present of a fine garment to god Siva, this chieftain is said to have presented his shawl to a peacock that was shivering in the cold.[18]

Vel Pari's territory was in the Pandyan country as is clear from a reference to it along with Pandimandalam in *Pandimandalasadakam*. This is further confirmed by the Pandyan inscriptions on the north wall of the old jail at Madura which speak about Parambunad, the traditional name of Pari's kingdom. If this is accepted, we may possibly identify the Piranmalai with Parambumalai of Pari, with which the Sangam poets always connect him.[19] Old inscriptions call the country adjoining this hill 'Dwarapathinadu' and thus remind us of the early Vel relationship with this territory. He is also considered as one of the greatest donors of the age,[20] to which confirmation is given even by the later Tevaram hymner, Sundaramurthi in a well-known line attributed to him referring to Pari as the very ideal of a donor.[21] *Patirruppattu* 71 discribes his gifts as "the downpour of the rain"; while *Puram* 200 records an episode like the one connected with the peacock and Vel Pegan already referred to. Here Pari is said to have given his very chariot as a support to a *mullai* plant that was in need of a prop. The poet Kapilar, who seems to have been his

17. Compare *Puram;* 141–147 and 127, 128 and 133,
18. *Sirupannarruppadai*, compare 11. 96–99 with 11. 85–87.
19. *Puram* 108, 109 ; *Sirupannarruppadai*, 91.
20. *Puram* 106, 107; *Agam* 78 ; *Sirupannarruppadai*, 89–9 etc.
21. "கொடுக்கிலாதனை பாரியே யென்று கூறினுங்
கொடுப்பாரிலை"

closest friend,[22] informs us that his state was a rich and fertile territory, which was so full of resources that it would be difficult even for a combination of all "the three kings" to defeat him.[23] The poems of the period indeed inform us that once when actually "the three kings" combined against him, they could defeat him only by treachery.[24] Pari's territory is said to have consisted of 300 villages.[25] Dr. V. Swaminatha Iyer opines that after the death of the chieftain, his two daughters were married to Brahmans through the good offices of the poet Kapilar.[26]

The territory of Vel Evvi lay in Milalaikurram[27] with its capital at Nidur[28] and also comprised Muthurkurram.[29] Vaipur seems to have been another town included in Evvi's territory.[30] Prof. K. A. N. Sastri places Milalaikurram in the Cola kingdom of the day.[31] It is quite possible that Muthurkurram also must have been within the confines of the same kingdom, probably identifiable with the present town of Muthur in Tanjore

22. There are at least 20 poems in *Purannanuru* alone of Poet Kapilar in praise of Pari. The poet's a attempt to get his daughters married after the chieftain's death has been already referred to.

23. Puram 109.

24. Puram 110; Agam, 78: Puram 112,

25. Puram 110.

26. Swaminatha Iyer, *Purananuru*, p. 13; also comment on *Puram* 113. Pandit M. Raghava Aiyengar in his *Velirvaralaru* (pp. 58–59) tells us that one of the daughters was married to Malayaman, King of Tirukoilur, and the other was married latterly through the endeavours of the poetess, Avvai, to Thevikon, a royal prince.

27. Puram, 24.

28. Agam, 266.

29. Puram, 24.

30. Agam, 126.

31. See *Supra*, F. N.

Dt. and its surroundings, Nidur being the earlier name of Nidamangalam in the same district not far from Muthur. Vaipur however remains unidentified. But a very welcome confirmation of the above identifications comes from Puram, 24 and Agam, 266, which refer to the conquest of Milalaikurram and Muthurkurram by the Pandyan king, Talayalanganathu-ceruvenra-Nedunjeliyan from the Nidur chieftain, Evvi,[32] which clearly make us understand that these divisions of territory belonging to Vel Evvi lay in the Cola territory before the conquest effected by this Pandyan king. It is not possible to say when exactly. this took place, though it is probable that it must have come off in the later period of Evvi's power. 233 and 234 of the *Purananuru* collection inform us that this chieftain died on the battle-field, though we are not informed of the enemy against whom he had fought on that occasion. It is just probable that these poems refer to Evvi's fight with this Pandyan king.

The last of the great Vel chieftains is Nannan Veman. The Sangam poems sometimes mention him merely as Venman.[33] His territory is called Palkunrakottam, (evidently a hilly tract, as the name implies) in Tondainadu with its capital at Sanganma,[34] probably the modern Senganmam or Sengama to the west of Tiruvannamalai, an identification which is supported by the description of Nannan's territory as Elilkunram, in agam 345 and 349,

32. Reference in *Puram* 24 to extensive paddy cultivation and its nearness to the sea (11. 1–4) as Muthur is actually even to-day, makes the identification all the more probable.

33. Agam 98.

34. The whole of *Malaipadukadam* deals with this chieftain's son, *Nannan sey Nannan*; see Naccinarkiniyar's comment (*Pattuppattu*; Ed. by Swaminatha Iyer, p. 372.)

which might refer to the (beautiful ?) hill of Tiruvanna-malai (elil = beauty). It seems to have been a well fortified city with many of the gaieties of modern civilisation.[35] Nannan's territory also included places like Param,[36] Viyalur,[37] and Pirambu,[38] unfortunately unidentifiable.[39]

II

"THE FIVE GREAT FAMILIES" AND THE IRUKKUVELS.

It is in this background of contemporary Vel history we have now to fix the early history of the Irukkuvels of Kodumbalur. From the numerous Vel chieftains referred to in the literature of the period the Irukkuvels stand out prominently in many respects, as will be seen in the subsequent study. What is proposed to be done in this section is to establish the connection between the Irukku-vels and the chieftains mentioned in the foregoing chapter.

First we will consider the relationship that existed among the six chieftains already mentioned. The two chieftains, Aye and Pegan, appear to belong to one family;[40] Pari and Evvi, to another;[41] while the other two seem to stand by themselves. Nannan, in particular, is

35. Raghava Aiyengar, *Velirvalalaru*, p. 64.
36. Agam, 152, 356.
37. Ibid, 97.
38. Ibid, 356.
39. Mr. A, Narayanaswamy Iyer, the editor of *Norrinai*, places Nannan's territory in Pulinadu along the western sea-coast and idetifies Elilmalai with the hill of the same name near Cannanore. (*Narrinai*, p. 91).
40. See *Supra*.
41. Puram 202.

represented in the Sangam poems as being unlike the rest of the families mentioned here. He is represented in them as a merciless and cruel tyrant accused as the murderer of a woman.[42] Puram 151 describes two of his family, Ilanganderako and Ilavacerako (Ilaviciko) as utterly uncharitable persons, which is against the general character of the chieftains here portrayed.

This establishes the fact that the Vels belonged to separate groups. From the point of time or period of entry into the south two groups have already been distinguished. Now one other differentia [illegible] be added on to this distinction, viz., kinship. From this standpoint the frequent reference in Sangam Literature to "five great Vel families"[43] seems to get better explained in relation to the "eighteen families of Vels" referred to by Naccinarkiniyar.[44] Further, in his comment on line 282 of *Pattinappalai*, the same commentator makes the term 'Irungovel' (Irukkuvel) comprise all the five great families.[45] From this one is led to infer that the Irukkuvels migrated into the south in five great families of which the family at Kodumbalur was perhaps the most famous and the longest to rule. It will be thus easy to understand the presence of an Irukkuvel ruler at Arayam and another further down in the south represented as being defeated once by Karikala[46] and at another time by Nedunjeliyan[47]

42. *Purananuru* (Swaminatha Iyer,) p. 12.

43. "ஐம்பெருவேளிர்" see comment of Naccinarkiniyar on *Pattinappalai*, l. 282.

44. Naccinarkiniyar, comment on *Tolkappiyam*, payiram

45. See comment on *Pattinappalai* l. 282; also V. Swaminatha Iyer, *Patirruppattu* p. 315.

46. *Pattinappalai*, l. 282.

47. *Maduraikkanji*, l. 55.

round about the same time. It would oppear from the Sangam poems that the Vel Evvi and the Vel Pari were none other but Irukkuvel chieftains appearing under different names;[48] and the name 'Irukkuvel' with its variant, 'Irungovel', was none other but a common clan name. In fact, the poem in the *Purananuru* collection,[49] which refers to the birth of the Irukkuvel from the vedic sacrifice of the northern sage and which, in all probability, had given rise to the name, 'Irukkuvel' (meaning "Vel from the vedic sacrifice", '*Irukku*' being a Tamil variant of the Sanskrit 'rig'.) must be taken to refer to all the Vels as a common name. In the context of Naccinarkiniyar's comment on *Tolkappiyam* (*payiram*) already referred to. The sage Agastiya, with whom we have identified "the northern sage", mentioned in *Puram* 201, is associated in this comment not only with one family but with eighteen families of Vels. In this light alone Naccinarkiniyar's comment is understandable when he speaks of the term 'Irungovenman' as embracing all the five great families of the Vels. The only point that eludes our grasp is why these five families alone should be given this name, and one only among them the particular name of 'Irukkuvel'. This however, appears as a sure indication of the greatness of the Irukkuvel family.

Mr. A. Narayanaswamy Iyer in his edition of the *Narrinai*[51] mentions names of five families (following *Puram* 76 and Agam 36) whom Pandyan Nedunjeliyan is said to have defeated at Talayalanganam and tells us that these formed

48. Puram, 202; see also Radhakrishna Iyer, *Gen. Hist. of the Pudukotta state*, appendix.
49. Puram, 201.
50. Naccinarkiniyar, comment on *Tolkapiyam*, payiram.
51. Narayanaswamy Iyer, *Narrinai*, p. 91.

"the five great families". They are mentioned as, Tithyan, Elini, Erumaiuran, Porunan and Irungovenman.[52] This does not however appear to be right, because there is nothing to identify these families, except the family of Irungovenman as Vel families. even though Mr. C. Rajagopala Iyer, the Editor of the *Ahananuru*, and Dr. V. Swaminatha Iyer, the editor of the *Purananuru*, call them as Vel chieftains.[53] Further, it is one thing to call them as Vel chieftains and another to class them among "the five great families" here discussed. Karikala the Great is said to have defeated nine chieftains at Vagaiparanthalai[54] and fourteen chieftains at Venni[55], while in *Agam* 135 the poet Paranar refers to the defeat of fourteen Velir chieftains in one battle. Therefore there is no point in arguing that the 5 Velir families are mentioned, because five chieftains are mentioned together in a defeat. Indeed Dr. V. Swaminatha Iyer himself identifies some of these chieftains differently elsewhere in his comment on the same *Purananuru*.[56] Further, if this identification is accepted, the Vel Evvi, whom our subsequent study well relates to the Irukkuvels, will have to be left out. Under these circumstances it seems best to identify the five families referred to with the first five chieftains mentioned at the beginning of this section, Nannan Venman being apparantly different from the rest as has been already pointed out.

52. Narayanaswamy Iyer; op. cit., 416.

53. *Agananuru* (Rajagopala Iyer) p. 414; *Purananuru*. (Swaminatha Iyer) p. 92.

54. *Agam*, 125.

55. *Agam*, 246.

56. *Purananuru* (Swaminatha Iyer) Index, 20, 48, where he calls Elini as Adigaman and Porunan as a king, not a chief.

III

CONCLUSIONS

This rather long discussion with regard to the Irukkuvel family in its relation to the other Vels must yield the following conclusions:

(*a*) That the Irukkuvels had come to stay in the south at least as early as the Sangam times, i.e., the II century A.D.

(*b*) That there were five great families of them ruling in different places in South India, known by the names, Vel Aye, Vel Pegan, Vel Avi, Vel Pari and Vel Evvi.

(*c*) That one among them particularly known as the Irukkuvels was ruling or attempting to establish its rule in the south round the first centuries of the Christian Era as is evidenced by the *Pattinappalai* and the *Maduraikanji*, which severally mention the defeat of 'Irungo venman' once at the hands of Karikala and at another time at those of Pandyan Nedunjeliyan.

Now, given that the Irukkuvels were definetely ruling from Kodumbalur at the time when light begins to dawn on their history (as the sequel will reveal), is it possible to reconstruct their earlier history in the interim period, between the beginning of the Vel migrations into the south and the beginning of their well-established Irukkuvel rule at Kodumbalur? To the answer of this question we shall turn in the chapter that follows.

PART II

THE IRUKKUVELS OF KODUMBALUR

PART TWO

THE IRUKKUVELS OF KODUMBALUR

CHAPTER IV

THE EARLY IRUKKUVELS

I

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE MUVARKOVIL INSCRIPTION

The Muvarkovil inscription already referred to in the first chapter records the construction of three *vimanas* (temples) and a *matha* at Kodumbalur by Bhuti Vikramakesari, whom the later history of the family confirms as an Irukkuvel chieftain. In mentioning this gift, the inscription records a geneology of 11 chieftains, 8 preceding and 2 succeeding the donor.

Much valuable history could be built round the information supplied by this epigraph if we could only assign its date. From the year 1908, when Mr. Venkayya first noticed it in his Annual Report of Epigraphy (Madras circle) for 1907—08,[1] it has been maintained successively by Mr. K. V. Subrahmania Iyer[2] and Rao Bahadur H. Krishna Sastri[3] that the date of Bhuti Vikramakesari and his record must be placed roughly in the first half of the X century A.D. Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri in a learned article on the subject published in the Journal of Oriental Research supports the same view.[4] Rev. H. Heras, on the other hand, controverts this opinion in

1. A.R.E. 1907—08, pp. 81—82.
2. Subrahamnia Iyer, op. cit., p. 149.
3. Krishna Sastri, S. I. I., III, p. 249.
4. K. A. N. Sastri, J.O.R., 1933, pp. 1—10.

an equally learned article published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,[5] and assigns the date of the record to the latter half of the VII century A.D.

A regular storm-centre has thus been created on this subject, though, as it appears to me, the date of the inscription is put beyond a doubt by the claim of Paradurgamardana (chieftain 7 of the geneology) of his conquest of Vatapi mentioned in the same record.

The following is the text of the inscription as published in the annual report referred to:

Name lost (vanquisher of the Pandya elephants)
|
Paravirajit
|
Viratunga, who conquered the Malavas
|
Ativira
|
Anupama (samghakrit)
|
Nripakesarin
|
Paradurgamardana (conqueror of Vatapi)
|
Samarabhirama (called yaduvamsaketu, killed the Chalukya at the battle of Adhirajamangala, married the Cola princes Anupama)
|
Bhuti Vikramakesari (destroyed the Pallava army on the banks of the Cauvery, conquered Vira Pandya in battle, destroyed Vanchivel, was ruling at Kodumbalur, married Karali and Varaguna.
|
By Karali
|
Parantakavarman — Adityavarman

Now, if Vatapi is admitted to refer to Badami, this claim of Paradurgamardana of having conquered Vatapi

5. Heras, J.R.A.S., 1934, pp. 1ff.

could refer to none other but the storming of Badami by the Pallava king, Narasimhavarman, in the year 642 A.D.,[6] since Badami was captured only once by the rulers of the south. The claim of Paradurgamardana's son, Samarabhirama, that he "killed the Chalukya at the battle of Adhirajamangala" reiterates the same conclusion, showing, as it does, a state of hostility between the Chalukyas and these chieftains at the time under discussion. There could be no hesitation in accepting this identification, unless we posit a later collision between the Chalukyas and the southern powers. Even in such a case the "conqueror of Vatapi" would go unexplained. "There seems to be no indication in any other record of the early X century of a conflict of the Chalukyas of Badami with the Tamils to which the battle of Adhirajamangala may be referred", writes Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri himself in the article above referred to.[7] On the other hand, Adhirajamangala seems to be easily identifiable with Manimangala mentioned in the Kuram plates of Paramesvaravarman I, in which Pulakesin is said to have been inflicted a crushing defeat by the Pallavas, who followed up their victory to the storming of Badami.[8] Was then Pulakesin killed in this battle? The Kodumbalur record would answer this question in the affirmative. It must be remembered that following the statement in the same Kuram plates that Narasimhavarman wrote "the syllable of the word *vijaya* as on a plate on

6. S. I. I., I, p. 152; II, p. 508; I. A., VIII, p. 277. The date 642 is universally accepted for the storming of Badami. The Rev. H. Heras, however, assigns the date 637 for the event (Heras, *Pallava Studies*, p. 53). This does not in any case affect our argument vitally.

7 J. O. R. op. cit., p. 7.

8. S. I. I., I, p. 152.

Pulakesin's back"[9] both Dr. Smith and Fleet surmised that Pulakesin had been actually killed by Narasimhavarman I.[10] The qustion as to who killed the great Chatlukyan king, Narasimhavarman or the chieftain Samarabhirama, need not detain us here,[11] since the chronology of the Kodumbalur inscription does not hang on this. It is quite possible that the chieftain claimed for himself what his master had done. In spite of doubt on this point the identification of Adhirajamangala with Manimangala seems to stand on unassailable ground. These facts taken together must convincingly argue for a VII century date for the Kodumbalur inscription.

The arguments assigned on the other side for a date three centuries later are based on "similarity of names or vague paleographical inferences", as Prof. Sastri himself confesses in the article referred to.[12] It is the opinion of Mr. Venkayya—and Prof Sastri follows him—that paleographically the inscription must be placed in the X century A. D.[13] Rao bahadur H. Krishna Sastri places it paleographically a little earlier even.[14] Whether one should follow an argument from paleography in preference to an established fact to which the inscription assuredly refers is the question to be here decided. Paleographists may indeed contradict one another; but established facts of

9. S. I. I., I, p. 152.

10. Smith, *Early History*, p. 495; Fleet, *Canarese Dynasties*, p. 358.

11. For a discussion on this question see later.

12. J. O. R., op. cit., p-4.

13. A. R. E., 1907–08, pp–81–82; Sastri, J. O. R. op. cit., p. 1. F. N.

14. S. I. I., III, p. 249.

history can never be controverted. Even granting for a moment that the conquest of Vatapi claimed by Paradurgamardana was not the conquest of Badami of 642 A. D., and that Adhirajamangala was not Manimangala, there is no possibility of accomodating the Chalukyan victory claimed by Samarabhirama, say about 900 A. D. (following the arguments of these writers), in which date he would be roughly placed, if his son, Vikramakesari, is placed in the first half of the X century A. D. The Chalukyan empire had indeed been overrun by the Rashtrakutas in the middle of the VIII not to rise again till the very close of the X or the beginning of the XI century A.D.

Further, if, as Venkayya and Prof. Sastri argue,[15] Bhuti Vikramakesari was a feudatory of Aditya II, and Vira Pandya whom the chieftain claims to have conquered is, as they say, "the same as that Vira Pandya, with whom the Cola king Aditya Karikala, elder brother of the great Rajaraja, fought in his youth"[16] it is impossible to explain the anti-Chalukyan achievements claimed by the Irukkuvels in this Kodumbalur inscription, seeing that the relations between the Chalukyas and the Colas were never strained in the reigns of Aditya II or Uttama Cola.[17] Thus the arguments from paleography leads to a violent twist of historical events both in point of time and in point of fact and has therefore to be abandoned. It is better to leave the script of the inscription even unexplained rather than post-date the Irukkuvel chieftains by three centuries. After all, as Rev. Heras pertinently remarks,

15. A. R. E., 1907–08, pp. 81–82; J. O. R., (1933), pp. 1–10.

16. Venkayya, A. R. E. 1907–08, loc., cit.

17. See for ex., Sathianatha Iyer, *Pol. and Cul. His,* I, pp. 432–33.

we will have no satisfactory explanation to offer to the architectural style displayed by Bhuti Vikramakesari in the Muvarkovil "without precedent and without consequent, totally unique in South Indian architecture."[18] But these difficulties bear no comparison with hard historical facts which fortunately the inscription reveals as its own unfailing witnesses. References to the "conquest of Vira Pandya in battle" and "the destruction of the Pallava army on the banks of the Cauvery" and other like references occurring in the inscription need not detain us here.[19] The Irukkuvel-Chalukya connections here portrayed do indeed suffice to fix the chronology of the record under discussion.

II

TENTATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF THE IRUKKUVEL RULERS

If Paradurgamardana's claim of his conquest of Vatapi is interpreted to mean the storming of Badami, (642 A. D.), the period of the chieftain who claims this honour must be placed round about this well ascertained date. Now, if we add to this the achievement of his son, Samarabhirama, at Adhirajamangala in the same Pallava-Chalukya war, as shown above, we are led to think that Paradurgamardana must have been in 642 A. D. a pretty old man, seeing that at that time already he had a fully grown-up son in the person of Samarabhirama, who claims for himself the achievement of having slain the Chalukya in battle. Thus, the period of Paradurgamardana may be tentatively assigned to the period between 615 and 645 A. D, (roughly assigning a period of 30 years

18. Heras; J.R.A.S., op. cit., loc. cit.
19. For a detailed discussion on all this see later.

for the rule of each chieftain). Now, following this plan a rough chronological scheme may be assigned to the 11 chieftains mentioned in this inscription in the following way:

No.	*Name of the ruler*	*Period of rule.*
1.	The vanquisher of the Pandya elephants (Name lost)	435–465 A. D.
2.	Paravirajit	465–495 A. D.
3.	Viratunga	495–525 A. D.
4.	Ativira	525–555 A. D.
5.	Anupama	555–585 A. D.
6.	Nripakesarin	585–615 A. D.
7.	Paradurgamardana	615–645 A. D.
8.	Samarabhirama	645–675 A. D.
9.	Bhuti Vikramakesari	675–705 A. D.
10.	Parantaka	705–735 A. D.
11.	Adityavarman	735–765 A. D.

This scheme would thus place the period of the first Irrukkuvel ruler recorded in this inscription roughly in the first half of the V century A. D.

III

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE IRUKKUVEL RULE AT KODUMBALUR

This particular period in South Indian history, when the Irukkuvel rulers apparently begin their rule at Kodumbalur is what historians have termed as "the dark period in South Indian history". Of this period nothing definitely is known and this is a period of great confusion

in South Indian politics. During this period, the Pandyas and the Colas suffer total eclipse, the Pallavas are struggling for existence and all the three seem to succumb to a common enemy. This is the period of the "Kalabhra interregnam", generally placed by writers between the IV and the VI centuries A. D.[20] "For three centuries from IV to VI the Pandyas suffered total eclipse and the Colas for nearly six centuries, IV to IX";[21] while the Pallava records of the period (the period of the Pallavas of the Sanskrit charters) mention not less than 16 rulers, which evidently portrays a period of confusion and utter disturbance.[22]

The same situation must have over-shadowed the Irukkuvel history of the period, between 300 and 500 A. D; and this should partly explain the mist that covers the history of these chieftains between the Sangam age and the first chieftain of the Kodumbalur inscription. If the Sangam age is taken to have roughly ended by 300 A. D., and the first chieftain of the Kodumbalur inscription is taken to have begun his rule in the middle of the V century, then it will appear that this "dark period" exactly corresponds to the period of probably the aĉme of the Kalabhras. The wonder then is not that we know so little about the Irukkuvel rulers of this period, but that we actually know something more definite about them than even about the crowned kings of the time. Judging from the Muvarkovil record, the Irukkuvels seem to have remained comparatively unaffected by the impact of the Kalabhras.

20. Sastri, *Pandyan Kingdom,* Chronological Summary, p. 258.

21. Sathiyanatha Iyer, op., cit., p. 296.

22. Gopalan, op. cit., p. 61. Mr. Gopalan places the rule of this Pallava dynasty between 340 and 550 A. D. (op. cit,, p. 47.)

Certain writers, indeed, argue that the Kalabhras were none other but the Satavahanas and that the Kalabhra invasion was nothing but the southern expansion of the Satavahana power.[23] Even more startling is the suggestion of Pandit M. Raghava Aiyengar, who says that the Kalabhras figure in Tamil literature as 'kalappar' or 'kalappalar' and were akin to the Vellalas.[24] Prof. Sastri commenting on this suggestion says, "It seems very likely that further study on the lines indicated by the learned Pandit will yield results of great value for the history of the period before the accession of Kadungon".[25] Though facts at our disposal do not warrant such a conclusiou, there is no doubt that there was good relationship between the Irukkuvels and the Kalabhras. Unfortunately, our knowledge of these wonderful people, who seem to have invaded the south with all imaginable vigour and martial prowess is so meagre as to leave us indeterminate. "How the Pandyas were overcome by the Kalabhras, how long the sovereignty of the latter lasted, and how they were driven back are points on which no information is at present forthcoming".[26] Mr. R. Sathyanatha Iyer in his scholarly work, "A Political and Cultural History of India", suggests that the Kalabhras must refer to the kalavar tribe to which and to whose leader, Pulli of Vengadam the *Agananuru* frequently refers[27] But the

23. S. K. Iyengar, *Sangam Age and Pandya Charters.*

24. M. Raghava Aiyengar, *Epigraphy and Tamil Literature;* see also Sastri, *Pandyan Kingdom*, pp 48-49, F. N.

25. Sastri, op. cit., loc., cit.

26. Venkayya, A.R.E., 1908, p.53.

27. Sathyanatha Iyer, op. cit., p. 296.

question is whether it is reasonable to identify a tribe like the Kalabhras, the destroyers of two imperial dynasties, the Pandya and the Cola, and the disturbers of a third, the Pallava, for full two centuries, with a small predatory tribe like the Kalavar. Possibly both the theory of Pandit Raghava Aiyengar and that of Mr. Sathyanatha Iyer contain very fecund germs of truth, and that is all that could be said in favour of their Views at present.

CHAPTER V
FIRST ACHIEVEMENTS

I

EVIDENCE OF THE SANGAM WORKS

Now, leaving the Kalabhra problem alone for the time being, we shall try to trace the early history of the Irukkuvels at Kodumbalur.

In the first place, did the rule set up at Kodumbalur about 435 A. D. mark a beginning or a transfer? In other words, did the Irukkuvel ruler (whose name is lost) begin the rule of a new family of the Irukkuvels or was he merely continuing the rule of an older family that had been set up elsewhere in the south and had transferred itself to Kodumbalur?

Most assuredly, the Irrukkuvels mentioned in the Muvarkovil record are not the same referred to in the Sangam poems. The following may be adduced as reasons for this statement:

(*a*) In the first place, the Irrukkuvels mentioned in this record present a contrast to those referred to in the Sangam poems almost from every point of view, as has been already shown.

(*b*) It is unnatural to expect a family referred to by the Sangam poets in the II century A. D. to continue to rule for a thousand years nearly,

since there are records of the 10th century A. D. or even later mentioning deecendants of the Irukkuvel family at Kodumbalur and its surroundings.[1]

On the other hand, there is no impossibility in supposing the Irukkuvels at Kodumbalur as a separate family belonging to the original stock. The comment of Naccinarkiniyar referring to the migration of the Irukkuvels in "five great families" only lends support to this view.

Various attempts seem to have been made early by the Irukkuvel family to establish itself in the south and all of them would seem to have ended abortively.[2] The *Pattinappalai* and the *Maduraikanji* mention at least two such occasions in no ambiguous terms.[3] The commentator of these lines tells us that the whole family of the Vels were destroyed by Pandyan Nedunjeliyan and Karikala in the two engagements here referred to.[4] The passage from *Maduraikanji* tells us that the Pandyan king not satisfied with the defeat of the Velir on the battlefield pursued them into their kingdom;[5] while the passage from *Pattinappalai* makes pointed reference to the defeat of the Irukkuvel (Irungovenman)[6] among others.

1. See *infra.*

2. *Pattinappalai,* ll. 274—82; *Maduraikanji,* ll. 55—61; *Purnm,* 76; *Agam,* 36, 125, 135, 246 etc.

3. *Pattinapalai, Maduraikanji,* loc., cit.

4. *Pattuppattu* (Swaminatha Iyer) pp. 214—15; also p. 178.

5. *Maduraikanji,* ll. 56—57.

6. *Pattinappalai,* Il. 210—82.

Though the chronology of the Sangam age is yet uncertain, it is generally admitted that the whole period lasted 3 centuries from the first to the third century A.D.[7] and that the kings of this age, Karikala, Senguttuvan and Nedunjeliyan, are contemporaries.[8] Further, the battles referred to above seem to have been the greatest battles fought by these respective kings.

From these circumstances the following facts may be gathered:

(*a*) That the Irukkuvels suffered two decisive defeats, which must have given a rude shock to their nascent attempt to establish themselves in the south. The poet Paranar refers to another victory of Karikala over 9 chieftains[10] at some place not mentioned. The names of the defeated chieftains also are not, unfortunately, mentioned. It is surmisable that the Irukkuvel had a further share of defeat on this occasion as well.

(*b*) That all these (at least the two first mentioned) engagements took place in the area covered by the modern district of Tanjore.[11]

7. Sathianatha Iyer, op. cit., p. 213.

8. „ „ p. 213—15.

9. Any cursory glance of the Sangam poems as also the very description of the engagement found in the references quoted above will show this.

10. Agam, 125.

11. Karikala's victory at Venni is identified with Kovilvenni and the Pandyan victory at Talayalankanam with Talayalangadu both in Tanjore Dt. (Swaminatha Iyerr, *Purananuru*; Sastri, *Colas*, I, p. 40.

(c) That the Irukkuvels are specially mentioned in both the defeats. The reference in *Pattinappalai* (1. 282) has already been mentioned. The general reference to the Velir defeat in *Maduraikanji* is clarified by the poet, Nakkirar, in *Agam* 36 (11. 19—20) to include the Irukkuvel in the defeat. The way of poet Uruthirankannanar, the author of *Pattinappalai*, is particularly striking. After mentioning the defeat of the several chieftains rapidly, he as though pauses, and mentions in grand style the Irukkuvel defeat.[12]

(d) That in the first case the defeated Irukkuvel is found in opposition with the Pandyan King and in the second case with the Cola and the Cera,[13] and that in all cases he is defeated along with numerous other chieftains.

To sum up, these conclusions flowing from the evidence of the Sangam works at our disposal portray a highly suggestive picture of contemporary political conditions, of the general mould in which the early furtunes of the Kodumbalur chieftains were cast and of the way in which events were moving, leading up to the final establishment of the Irukkuvel power in that placel

The cardinal factor in the political situation of the South India of the time was that numberless tribes and chieftaincies were trying to establish themselves in power and prestige at the expense of the three well-known crowned kings of the period. As a consequence there were

12. *Pattinappalai* 11. 280—82.

13. *Pattinappalai*, 1.277; *Maduraikanji*, 1. 55.

innumerable engagements between them, the chiefs allying themselves, against one or the other of these kings. For a long time, roughly throughout the three centuries of the Sangam age, this conflict remained in decisive. The student of the Sangam poems cannot but be struck with the frequent references to the defeat of 7 chieftains, of 9 chieftains, of 11 chieftains, of 14 chieftains and so on.[14] Thus the Sangam age was, from the point of view of political history, a period of interminable fight between the chieftain and the king, a fight between subjection and independence. Obviously, this could not go on endlessly. Apparently in the IV or early in the V century A.D., all the powerful chieftains joined together to make a final and consummate effort against the ruling houses. This is perhaps what we gropingly designate as the "Kalabhra interregnum."

Thus we find that the views of both Pandit M. Raghava Aiyengar and Mr. R. Sathiananthа Iyer do contain germs of truth. There seems much to be said in favour of both their views, since it appears that the Kalabhras were none other but all the important chieftains of the period in alliance against the ruling power. The name 'Kalabhra' itself is hard to explain. It might as well be a later day name given in retrospect to these disturbers of peace either by the rulers, or the people or by both. The Tamil word, *'Kalavaram'* which means 'disturbance' perhaps aptly describes the situation created by the Kalabhra intrusion (or invasion, as it is generally described). It is perhaps impossible to say as to which of these two terms—Kalabhra and Kalavaram-

14. *Agam*, 36, ll. 19—20; *Agam*, 246 etc.

was earlier in usage. In fact the whole terminology bears a northern tinge, indicating thereby also the strongly marked northern element in the "Kalabhra invasion". In fact we find in the references above quoted the defeated chieftains often styled comprehensively by the term 'Velir', the very men whom the Tamils hated as "north-men" It may be pointed out in passing that the view of Pandit M. Raghava Aiyengar already referred to that the Kalabhras were in final analysis "akin to the Vellalas"[61] seems to get here its confirmation. Such, then, is the plausible solution of what is termed "the Kalabhra problem". Viewed in this light, the rise of the Irukkuvel power in Kodumbalur as a ruling chieftaincy just in the middle of this period becomes at once intelligible.

II

THE GATHERING OF ALLIES

Who were the chief confederates of the Irukkuvels in this fight for independence? If previous history be taken as any guidance, the Sangam poems mention besides the Velir families several chieftains like Elini, Porunan, Tithyan, Erumaiuran and others already referred to as the allies of the Irukkuvels. But lines 280—282 of *Pattinappalai* attach special significance to the Irukkuvel alliance with a tribe, that appears to be the 'Kurumbar' of the Tondamandalam region. The commentator, Naccinarkiniyar, explains line 281 of the *Pattinappalai*,[17]

15. *Maduraikanji*, 1. 55.
16. Sastri, *Pandyan Kingdom*, pp. 48—49, F.N.
17. *Pattuppattu* (Swaminatha Iyer), p. 315.

to which attention has already been drawn, *"Pun poduvar vali ponra"* as referring to the defeat of the cow-herd class, which could be easily identified with the Kurumbar.

The history of this community is yet an unwritten history. There is, however, no doubt that the Kurumbar were a powerful tribe occupying the region of Tondamandalam, comprising the modern districts of Chingleput, Madras and North Arcot at about the time under discussion. Native accounts like those found in the Mackenzie collections point to Poral or Madavaram near Madras as the ancient royal fortress of the Kurumbar. Traces of another of the kind covering forty *'cawnies'* of ground with two boundary walls are to be still found in Marutan, near Conjeevaram. Tiruvadisulam in the same area seems to have been yet another stronghold of the Kurumbar in ancient times. Padaividu in Polur Taulk of the North Arcot district, though now a deserted and ruined place, is supposed to have been once the Kurumbar capital, It is said to have been then 16 miles in circumference full of temples, choultries and fine private residences.[18] An old Saivite temple at Velarpuram in Walajapet Taluk of the same district is also assigned by tradition to the Kurumbar days.[19]

All these historical remains bear testimony to the great power and influence of the Kurumbar in the area and the times referred to by them. The Sangam works point out that these were war-like men, of whom even kings were

18. Stuart, *N. Arcot Manual.*

19 Ibid. The name Velarpuram is very suggestive of the Vel-Kurumbar connection.

afraid.[20] Dr. V. Swaminatha Iyer translates the term 'kurumba' as a fort,[21] showing thereby the close connection between the Kurumbar and the fort, They must have been great warriors, who always lived in forts. Puram 177 describes in elaborate terms the fortified palace and daily life of Athiyan, one of the Kurumbar chieftains, and how he was bent on war and drink.

Some historians have identified the Pallavas with the Kurumbar;[22] and Mr. Rea offers an interesting explanation when he translates the term 'Pallava' itself to mean a cow-herd or Kurumbar (from the two Tamil words, 'pal' meaning milk and 'avil' meaning to pull or draw)[23] The account entitled, "Ancient History of Tondamandalam" in the Mackenzie Mss. says that the Kurumbar were responsible for the erection of not less than 24 forts within the region of Tondamandalam, which they divided into 24 districts and that "Adondai-chakravarti, said to be an illegitimate son of a contemporary Cola king" rose from their community to conquer the region for the Cola king.[24] Now, this Adondai (also known as Tondaiman Ilandiraiyan) appears in other accounts as the originator of the Pallavas,[25] which harps back on the theory of Mr. Rea and others, who make the Pallavas descendants of the Kurumbar and in fact in the

20. Puram, 177, 97. 98 etc.
21. *Purananuru* (Swaminatha Iyer), Index, p. 27.
22. Gopalan, op., cit., pp. 24–25.
23. Rea, *Pallava Architecture,* p. 2, F. N. 5.
24. See Gopalan, op., cit, pp. 26–27.
25. Gopalan, op., cit., pp. 21–24.

Mackenzie Mss. account, what became called Tondamandalam after Adondai is mentioned also as 'Kurumbabhumi.'[26]

Mr. Gopalan, who has made a careful study of the Pallavas, however, says categorically that the identification of the Pallavas with the Kurumbar has absolutely nothing to support it.[27] Whatever be the truth in this matter, it cannot be denied that the Kurumbar and the Pallavas had very close connections in early times, if alongside of the evidence we have gathered here we place the fact that the Pallava inscriptions do not mention at any time any conflict between the two.

On the other hand, the Irukkuvel connection with the Kurumbar is equally clearly borne out by the evidence of the *Pattinappalai*, line 281, already noted. In the Velvikudi grant of Pandyan Nedunjaiyan he claims to have defeated the Vel Aye in alliance with the Kurumbar in Nattukurumbu.[28] Prof. K. A. N. Sastri referring to this tells us that Pandyan Nedunjadaiyan "suppressed with a strong hand a local rising of Nattukurumbu headed by Ay Vel"[29] The second plate of Bhaskara Ravivarman recording the gift of land for the temple at Tirunelli by one Kanjikuttuvarman *alias* Adigal Kurumburiyar Tiruvadi, who was governing the Muttu-Kuru of the Kurumburainadu, says that the charity was placed under the management of the family of the donor, the assembly

26. Gopalan; op. cit., loc. cit.

27. Ibid, p. 25.

28. E. I., XVIII, p. 294.

29. Sastri, *Pandyan Kingdom*, p. 60. Following H. K. Sastri he rightly identifies Nattukurumbu with Kurumbanad. (Ibid, p. 60, F. N., 2)

known as the "Seven hundred" of the Muttu-Kuru and the Vellalas "who are the major landlords of the village."[30] This record, though of a later period bears evidence to the high position occupied by the Kurumbar even in later-day history and the close relationship that existed between them and the Vellalas for a very long time.

Thus we arrive at the conclusion that at the time of our history the Irukkuvels were in close alliance with the Pallavas on the one hand and the Kurumbar on the other. The Muvarkovil inscription mentioning the part played by Paradurgamardana in the storming of Badami fighting on the side of the Pallavas is a pointer in this direction. If an ear lier evidence is needed to prove the Vel-Pallava relationship, it is found in the charter of Bappadeva, one of the earliest of the Pallava kings, where he makes a free distribution of a 100,000 ox ploughs and many gold coins to the Vellalas.[31] These two records seem to mark the beginning and the maturity of the Vel-Pallava relationship in early times.[32]

III

ESTABLISHMENT OF POWER AT KODUMBALUR

In this last section of the chapter dealing with the first achievements of the Irukkuvels in the south, we may try to reconstruct the final and immediate circumstances,

30. E. I., XVI, pp. 343–44.

31. Gopalan, op., cit., p. 37.

32. Many Pallava inscriptions of the period prior to that of Bhuti Vikramakesari in Kodumbalur are found scattered all over the Pudukottah State. The cave carved by Pallava Mahendravarman at Sittanavasal in the State as also his music inscription at Kudumiyamalai date just a little earlier than Vikramakesari.

that led up to the establishment of their actual rule at Kodumbalur.

Without, however, indicating his sources Mr. G. Radhakrishna Iyer, the author of the "General History of the Pudukottai State", ventures with remarkable precision on a conclusion, which seems after all to indicate the truth. "The fact seems to be", he writes, "that a member of the Irukkuvel ruling family in and to the south east of the State went over to Kodumbalur in the western portion of the State and established himself there with the title of the 'Irukkuvel'[33] In our discussion of the early Vels and their relation to the Irukkuvels it has been shown clearly that the Vel Evvi and the Vel Pari along with the Irukkuvels formed one family. It is quite possible that the Vel Evvi was the ruler who was ruling the territory "in and to the south east of the State", as that territory was part of the Milalaikurram of Vel Evvi, already identified as a territory that adjoined the modern State of Pudukottah. At the time of his defeat by Pandyan Nedunjeliyan (already referred to) Mutturkurram, the territoty adjoining Milalaikurram, was perhaps in the hands of the Irukkuvel family, mentioned in *Puram* 24 (which refers to the conquest of the two territories by the Pandyan king) as "*thon muthir velir.*" Prof. K.A.N. Sastri, as seen earlier, writes in a foot-note to his description of this conquest: "Perhaps Mutturkurram was not taken from Evvi but some one else." It should be noted also that Evvi is called in this poem மாவேள்' and that Mutturu is said to have belonged

33. Radhakrishna Iyer, *Gen. Hist. of the Pudu. State,*, Appendix. ii.

to 'தொன்முதிர்வேளிர்"[34] Dr. V. Swaminatha Iyer, the learned editor of the *Purananuru*, also says that Evvi was the lord of only the Milalaikurram.[35] The close conection between the Vel Evvi and the Irukkuvels is, on the other hand, characteristically brought out by the poet Kapilar in the song already discussed. Further, the existence of a place called Pullirukkuvelur (Tanjore Dt.) within the territory identified as Mutturukurram in a previous chapter seems to clinch the issue. The fact already noted that all the important engagements in which the Irukkuvel was defeated at the hands of the ruling kings were fought within the territory of the same district further emphasises this conclusion.

It follows therefore that in course of time, when circumstances became more favourable, some one in the Irukkuvel line joined issue with the Pandyan ruler, conquering from him the lost regions and set up his rule in the south east of the modern Pudukottah State, as Mr. Radhakrishna Iyer surmises, and from there passed on to Kodumbalur. This appears to be none other than the chieftain (the first in the geneology) whose name is lost, and who claims to be " the vanquisher of the Pandya elephants ". It is not possible to identify the Pandyan ruler against whom the victory was won, on account of the darkness that surrounds the history of this period. Possibly, the Irukkuvels received help in this fight from the Pallava ruler who must have been, arguing from the chronological scheme assigned to these chieftains, Simha-

34. Puram, 24 ll. 20-23; See also Sastri, *Pandyan kingdom*, p. 28, F. N., 4.

35. *Purananuru* (Swaminatha Iyer) p. 16.

varman II, following the chronology arrived at by Mr. Gopalan for the Pallavas.[36]

It is, however, a fact that early in Simhavisnu's regin the Irukkuvels came under the sway of the Pallavas. The Velurpalayam grant tells us that he "quickly seized the country of the Colas embellished by the daughter of Kavera", in doing which, as the Kasakudi plates inform us, he defeated the Kalabhra, Malava, Cola, Pandya and the Simhala, "proud of the strength of their arms", which probably means that they opposed him in his victorious march.[37] On the other hand, the Muvarkovil Inscription speaks of Viratunga (chieftain 3 of the geneology) as the "conqueror of the Malavas," which seems to refer to the collaboration of Viratunga with the great Pallava king, Simhavisnu. It is true that there appears to be a difference of 50 years between the periods of Simhavisnu (c. 575 A. D.) and Viratunga (c. 525 A. D.) but it can reasonably be presumed that in a chronological scheme that is wholly tentative on both sides this difficulty need not detain us.

Be that as it may, the Malavas, whom Viratunga claims to have conquered, seem to have been a very powerful family of chieftains ruling over Malakongu (eastern Kongu) extending eastwards from Karur inculding a small portion of the modern Pudukottah State and bordering on the modern Trichinopoly and and Tanjore districts.[38] The Sangam works are in great praise of their high status and prowess in warfare.[39] An

36. Gopalan, *Pallavas*, p. 66, 68. Mr. Gopalan places Simhavarman between A. D. 436 and 460, following the datum furnished by the Jain work, '*Lokavibhaga*.'

37. S. I. I., II, V, p. 510.

inscription of Parantaka I informs us that Parantakan Madevadigalar, one of the queens of Gandharaditya, second son of Parantaka I, was the daughter of a Malava prince.[40] The Velvikudi grant tells us, on the other hand, that Pandyan Maravarman Rajasimha married a Malava princess and had a son by her named Jatila.[41]

There could, however, be no doubt on the point that during Simhavisnu's regin, the Kodumbalur territory had effectually passed under the Pallava supremacy. Otherwise, even if other arguments are unavailing, we cannot explain the presence of inscriptions of his son, Mahendravarman in this region, though inscriptions do not speak of any southern conquest of this ruler.[42]

38. K. V. S. Iyer, *Sketches of Deccan*, p. 129, 131.
39. Agam, 35, 91, 187; Puram, 90 etc.
40. S. I. I., II, III, p. 375.
41. See Velvikudi Grant, E. i. Vol. XVII, p. 293.
42. Gopalan, op., cit., pp. 84—85.

CHAPTER VI

THE THREE GREAT CHIEFS

I

PARADURGAMARDANA
(615—645 A. D.)

The Muvarkovil inscription brings to light three great chiefs of the Irukkuvels of Kodumbalur. They are, as the inscription names them, Paradurgamardana, conqueror of Vatapi, Samarabhirama, ostensibly his son, who claims to have killed the Chalukya; king at the battle of Adhirajamangala and Bhuti Vikramakesari, who claims to have conquered the Pallava forces on the banks of the Cauvery, defeated Vira Pandya and killed Vancivel.[1]

The governing factor of the history of at least the first two chieftains is the Pallava hegemony, under which they were the great feudatories.

The period of Paradurgamardana roughly coincides with that of the Pallava king, Mahendravarman (600-630 A. D.), and the first part of the reign of his successor, Narasimhavarman, rulers perhaps of the greatest importance among the Pallavas. To Mahendravarman was handed down a kingdom that extended all along the Coromandal coast from Kalahasti in the north to,

1. A. R. E., 1907—08, pp. 81—82.

Pudukottah in the south and from the Eastern Ghats on the one side to Namakkal on the other, as inferrable from the copper plates referring to the reign of Simha. visnu. Thus Mahendravarman succeeded to a territory that naturally embraced the Irukkuvel chieftaincy. The part that Paradurgamardana claims to have played in the conquest of Vatapi seems, therefore, natural enough.

The following lines of evidence make this inference all the more conclusive. In the first place, is the statement found in the Karnul plates of Vikramaditya, which tells us that "tnree allied kings" were ranged against Pulakesi at the battle of Manimangala,[2] which is one of the two pitched fields of battle in the war under reference. Two kings among the three in alliance are clearly known to us from specific statements in records dealing with the engagement. They are the Pallava king, Narasimhavarman, and the Ceylonese prince, Mana-vamma.[3] The Mahawamsa gives a detailed account of the participation of Manavamma in this Pallava fight with the Chalukya,[4] though, unfortunately, it does not mention the name of the battle. The chronicle, however, mentions that this was a fight with the Chalukyan king, "who invaded Kanchi."[5] This description represents the Chalukya ruler as being on the offensive. That this reference is therefore to the battle of Manimangala is obvious; since it was in this war between Narasimha-varman and Pulikesi that the Chalukya king took the

2. J. B. B. R. A, S. XVI, p. 226.

3. *Mahavamsa*, (Colombo, 1909), p. 35. J. B. B. R. A. S., loc., cit.

4. *Mahavamsa* (Colombo) p. 35.

5. Ibid.

offensive by invading the Pallava capital, and the fact that the battle referred to is that of Manimangala is borne out by its very nearness to Kanci.

This being established, we may now seek to identify the third ruler in alliance against the Chalukya. Historians have till now variously identified this third ruler with the Pandyan Koccateyan,[6] and with the Andhra prince, Kanduvetti, who was, according to the same Mahavamsa, another friend of the Ceylonese king.[7] Rev. H. Heras, who made this second identification, calls it in the article cited earlier as "a mere suggestion without any strength,"[8] The identification made with Koccateyan, on the other hand, is obviously mistaken, since the commencement of his reign has been placed in the year 710 A. D.,[9] while the war under reference is said to have been fought in 642 A. D. Besides, the invasion of Pulakesi into the kingdom of the Pallavas is described in the Chalukyan inscriptions as an effort "for the benefit of the Cola, Cera and the Pandya"[10] i.e., as an attempt, perhaps, to destroy the power of the Pallavas, which was considered as doing a good turn to the southerners. It is therefore against the spirit of the campaign to suppose the alliance of the Pandyan prince with the Pallava king.

Under these circumstances, the statement in the Kodumbalur inscription with regard to Paradurgamardana that he conquered Vatapi is certainly an information refreshingly enlightening. The Irukkuvel culture of the

6. M. Raghava Aiyengar, J. O. R., III, p. 77.
7. Heras; *Pallava Studies.*
8. Heras, J. R. A. S., loc. cit.
9. Sathinatha Iyer, op., cit., p. 367.
10. E. I., I, p. 1.

north and Paradurgamardana's dependence on the Pallava hegemony lend great support to the identification of the third king of the alliance with him. The Mahavamsa tells us that "when the Chalukyan king invaded Kanci, Narasimha ran to meet him, though he was in great danger"[11] The urgency with which he is thus said to have been called to arms by the Chalukyan invasion makes the identification all the more plausible, seeing the nearness of the Irukkuvel chieftain to the Pallava capital, compared with the other princes of the identification.

II

SAMARABHIRAMA
(645—675 A. D.)

Samarabhirama claims to have kilied the Chalukya at the battle of Adhirajamangala in the Kodumbalur inscription above referred to, which is, by the way, the only inscription, which records such an event. Further, Samarabhirama is the only person, who makes such a claim with reference to the war here adverted to. On the face of it, therefore, Samara's claim seems to be trustworthy. The greatness of the claim itself should compel one to view with favour the statement of this inscription. The Kuram plates tell us that Narasimhavarman wrote "the syllable of the word 'Vijaya' as on a plate on Pulakesin's back." This is the only claim advanced besides that of Samarabhirama with reference to the victory over the person of Pulakesi, though it is not in a sense so clear

11. *Mahavamsa*, loc., cit.

as that of Samarabhirama. Curiously enough, the two inscriptions taken together seem to complete our information, the one telling us clearly that the Chalukya was killed and the other saying that the Chalukya was none other but Pulakesi. There need not arise any doubt also on the point as to who between these two killed the Chalukya king, since while the claim of Samara is absolutely clear, that of Narasimha is not.

If it be thus accepted that the chieftain Samarabhirama, was the slayer of the great Chalukyan monarch, the greatest of his line, against whose powers Harsha himself had to gather "troops from the five Indies and the best generals from all countries"[12] as the Chinese traveller, Hiuen-Tsang tells us, the greatness of the achievement needs no telling. It must be further pointed out that the defeat and the death of the Chalukya broke the spell of the invincibility of his dynasty and began the era of its decline and the rise of the Pallavas as, in the words of the Teggina-Irappa inscription, "the foremost of kings."[13]

III

BHUTI VIKRAMAKESARI

(675—705 A. D.)

The third great chief who stands out from the Kodumbalur inscription is Bhuti Vikramakesari, the person responsible for the inscription itself. Though he makes no claim to any concrete action like his predecessors, he has left us in the events of his reign an

12. Beal, *Hiuen-Tsang*, II, p. 255.
13. Fleet, *Canarese Dynasties*, p. 328.

unmistakable mark of a great fighter, statesman, artist, architect and designer. He was, according to this inscription itself, the first one to establish firmly the Irukkuvel rule at Kodumbalur.[14]

The distinguishing feature of the rule of Vikramakesari was that in his time the general complexion of South Indian politics changed from the supremacy of the Pallavas to that of the Colas. This became the governing factor of Vikramakesari's rule. The Cola records sufficiently enlighten us on the fact that the southernmost part of what was once the Colamandala was re-conquered from the Pallavas early in the reign of Paramesvaravarman I, which would have naturally meant the establishment of the Cola power in the territory of the Irukkuvels also.[15] That the Cauvery basin was in the hands of the Cola king during this period is confirmed by a striking evidence from the Chalukyan side given by the Gadval plates of Vikramaditya which, after narrating the capture of Kanci by the Chalukyan king during the reign of Paramesvaravarman, tell us that he "camped in Urgapura in the Cholika province"[16], which clearly points to the extension of that province to the Cauvery territory early in Paramesvaravarman's reign. On the side of the Colas, the same fact is emphasised by the saintly poet, Tirumangai Alwar, who sings of Kocengannan, apparently the contemporary of the Pallava Paramesvaravarman, "as the victor or Venri and Alundai",[17] places which are again situated in the Cauvery territory.

14. The inscription specially mentions about him that he "was ruling at Kodumbalur."

15. E. I., X, p. 105; *Peria Tirumoli*, IV, vi.

16. E. I., loc., cit.

Peria Tirumoli, loc., cit.

Thus the reign of Bhuti Vikramakesari coincides with the beginning of the Cola bid for their second empire, which naturally begins with the re-conquest of the Cauvery district by the Cola power. In this context, Vikramakesari's first claim in the Kodumbalur inscription that he "destroyed the Pallava army on the banks of the Cauvery" becomes quite meaningful. It is this conquest of the Pallava that is referred to by the contemporary poet, Tirumangai Alwar, when he speaks of Kocengannan as "the Lord of the southern northern king."[18]

Nor are we left without evidence as to the genera way by which this Irukkuvel-Cola alliance was made. In the first place, the Kodumbalur inscription itself records Samarabhirama's marriage with Anupama, a Cola princess, which makes us understand that his son, Vikrakesari, was himself of Cola descent on his mother's side. We are in fact made to think that this marriage alliance had been designedly made by the Colas with a view to gather allies for their conquest.

Now, the Pallava king whom the Irrukkuvel chieftain claims to have defeated appears to be Paramesvaravarman on a comparison of the dates of either rulers. Further, it can also be argued that the Pallava ruler was towards the close of his reign at the time of his defeat, since his death date is generally placed in 680 A. D.[19] His defeat was perhaps easily achieved, since Vikramakesari must have been then a robust young man (acc. 675 A. D.). The second Pallava contemporary of Vikramakesari,

18. *Peria Tirumoli*, loc., cit.

19. Sathianatha Iyer, op. cit., p. 361.

Narasimhavarman II, cannot be the Pallava king here referred to on account of the evidence of the Gadval plates, which, as we have said, refer to Uraiyur as in the Cola province already in the days of Paramesvaravarman I.

But who can be that Vira Pandya, whom Vikrama claims to have conquered? The question does not allow of a definite reply in the present state of our information. From a pure chronological consideration, Vira Pandya must refer to Arikesarivarman (670—710 A. D.), whose aggressive campaigns both the Sinnamanur plates and the Velvikudi grant elaborately record. In the Sinnamanur records, the Pandya king boasts to have captured the Cera king with his near relations and forces. It is quite possible that he came into conflict with the Colas also, of which mention was not made in his records perhaps on account of the defeat he might have suffered at their hands. That the Pandyan monarch was defeated by the Colas is also obvious from Tirumangai Alwar, who styles the Cola contemporary of Vikrama as "the Lord of the southern Tamil king."[20] Still, the identification of Vira Pandya with Arikesari cannot be considered as being conclusive.

The third claim of Vikrama is his defeat of Vanci Vel. We know from the epic *Silappadikaram* that the Vels had colonised a part of the Cera kingdom as early as the 2nd century A. D. The epic in fact mentions one Alumbil Vel as a minister to the Cera king Senguttuvan. Besides, the name 'Vanci' attached to 'Vel' seems to point further to the territory of Vanci Vel in the Cera kingdom. The period of Vikrama was one of hardship to the Cera

20. *Peria Tirumoli*, loc., cit.

line pressed as it was between the aggrandisement of the Colas and the Pandyas. It must have been in one of the campaigns of the Colas into the Cera kingdom that this Vanci Vel must have been defeated.

What is particularly noteworthy in the regime of Vikrama is that he was a great builder of temples. Certain original and pleasing developments in temple architecture are to be seen in the Muvarkovil built by him at Kodumbalur (according to the inscription found on its wall, and so far discussed). His artistic achievements are well worth the study of the student of art and architecture. In the estimate that we shall make of the Irukkuvel contribution to the cultural progress of the country, this matter can be discussed at some length.

Vikrama's support of the Cola cause seems to have been more close than the support given by his predecessors to the cause of the Pallavas. Of the two wives attributed to him in the Kodumbalur record, Karrali was mostly a Cola princess, as is apparent from the names of his two sons by her, Parantaka and Adityavarman, which are characteristically Cola names. Parantaka is even read under the Cola title, 'Parakesarivarman' in one of the inscriptions from Kudumiyamalai, which is dated in the 6th year of Parakesarivarman.[21] This cannot refer to a Cola king, since the inscription records a grant to the temple at the place by Varagunanatti, described as the queen of Bhuti Vikramakesari, who, following our chronology, must have preceded any Cola king of this name.

21. 337 of 1904.

The Irukkuvels seem to get amalgamated and in some way almost identified with the Colas at the close of the reign of the Irukkuvel chieftain Adityavarman. The rule of Kodumbalur ceases to be associated with them almost soon after the reign of Parantakavarman. The Velvikudi grant, which refers to the victory of Termaran at Kodumbalur against Nandivarman II (about 750 A. D.) does not make any mention of the Irukkuvels in Kodumbalur.[22] The Second Sendalai Pillar Inscription, which describes the same Pandya-Pallava war from the Muttaraiyan side is even more explicit on the point.

> "When the vel of Maran (the Muttaraiyan king)... became hot, the lengthy and high walls of cool Kodumbai (Kodumbalur), which belonged to unfriendly kings and on whose storeyed buildings flags were hoisted), were destroyed and the dust rose (to the sky) and formed as it were a second earth there."[23]

The significance of this passage with reference to the present argument will become clear on a study of the Irukkuvel—Muttraiyan relations, which were too friendly for the inscription to describe Kodumbalur as 'unfriendly'. The natural conclusion, therefore, is that during this Pandya—Pallava war the Irukkuvels were no more ruling at Kodumbalur.

22. E. I., XVII, p. 293.
23. E. I., XIII, p. 146.

CHAPTER VII

THE IRUKKUVEL–MUTTARAIYAN RELATIONS

I

THE PROBLEM OF IDENTIFICATION

Closely connected with Vikramakesari is the history of the Muttaraiyan chiefs, who rule from Tanjore contemporaneously with Vikramakesari at Kodumbalur. They governed a portion of the modern Tanjore and Trichinopaly districts and a part at least of the Pudukottah state. Both the range of their inscriptions, which extend from Sendalai and Tiruchendurai in Tanjore district to Tirumayyam and Malaiakovil in the Pudukottah state, and the remains of their rule to be found in the same area like 'Marppidugueri' in Alambakkam, 12 miles from Lalgudi (Trichy Dt.), Muttarasanallur, 5 miles from Trichinopoly and the weight called, 'Videlvidugukal' once in use in Uyyakondan Tirumalai confirm this conclusion. The researches of scholars like Mr. K. V. Subrahmania Iyer have made it increasingly evident that these chiefs once played a very important part in South Indian history, especially on behalf of the losing Pallava power.

It is not easy to say how and for what reasons the alliance between the Irukkuvels and the Muttaraiyans was brought about. Possibly, it was an attempt of the latter to bring back the former to the support of the

Pallavas, with whom the Muttaraiyans seem to have been closely attached. Be that as it may, we hear in one of their inscriptions that Varagunatti, the daughter of a certain Videlvidugu Muttaraiyan, was given in marriage to a Sembiyan Irukkuvel.[1] If the identity of this Sembiyan could be established, we would stand much to be enlightened; but the solution to the problem is made very much uncertain from both sides. The name "Sembiyan Irukkuvel" appears too commonly among the Irukkuvels to help the identification of the person mentioned here; and at the same time the Muttaraiyan chronology is still very much unsettled.[2] This problem can therefore be solved only after settling the chronology of the Muttaraiyan chiefs.

II

THE MUTTARAIYAN CHRONOLOGY

We shall attempt in this section to frame a chronological scheme for the Muttaraiyans and see how it fits in with the history of the Irrukkuvels. Thus the "Sembiyan Irukkuvel" spoken of as the son-in-law of Videlvidugu Muttaraiyan may possibly be identified.

The following is the geneology of the Muttaraiyan chiefs, as found in their inscriptions:[3]

1. E. I., XIII, p. 138.

2. Mr. K. V. Subrahmaniya Iyer in editing the Sendalai Pillar inscriptions, the most famous of the Muttaraiyan records, says, "There is nothing in these records to show the time when the kings mentioned in these flourished or the duration of their reigns." E. I., XIII, p. 135.

3. K. V. Subrahmania Iyer, op. cit., loc., cit.

1. Perumpidugu Muttariyan alias Kuvavan Maran.
2. Ilangovadirayan alias Maran Paramesvaran.
3. Perumpidugu Muttaraiyan alias Suvaran Maran. (probably his son)
4. Videlvidugu Vilupperadi Araisan alias Sattan Maran.
5. Videlvidugu Muttaraiyan.
6. Sattan Paliyili.
7. Marpidugu.
8. Satrubhayankara Muttaraiyan.
9. Videlvidugu Muttaraiyan.[4]

The conquest of Tanjore from the Muttaraiyan chief by the Cola Vijayalaya about the middle of the IX century referred to in Cola inscriptions[5] furnishes for all intents and purposes the last date of the Muttaraiyan rule, since though the Muttaraiyans might have continued in power for some more time after this event, the glory of their chieftaincy must have without doubt set with the rise of Vijayalaya and his successors. In fact, these chieftains seem to pass into the service of the Colas after this period, to which evidence is found in an inscription of the time of Kulotunga I, from Tirunedungulam in Trichinopoly District, which mentions one Vijayalaya Muttaraiyan as a signatory in a record.[6] The name, Vijayalaya Muttaraiyan itself is not without significance. This event must therefore mark the period of the last ruler of the

4. This geneological scheme follows that of Mr. K. V. Subrahmania Iyer in E. I., XIII, pp. 135 ff., with a little adaptation of my own, for which reasons are assigned in the sequel.

5. S. I. I., III, i, p, 7; E. I., XV, p. 53.

geneology. The period of the Cola King Vijayalaya himself is placed between 850 and 871 A. D.[7] The conquest under reference may, therefore, be placed c. 870 A. D., since this is said to have provoked a Pandya-Pallava conflict, which ended about 880 A. D. in the battle of Sripurambiyam, near Kumbakonam.[8]

The earliest date of the Muttaraiyan rule is furnished by the date of the Pallava king, Mahendravarman (600—630 A. D.), who bears the characteristically Muttaraiyan title, 'Perumpidugu' in two inscriptions of the period. The name of the first Muttaraiyan chief, Perumpidugn' appears to confirm this conclusion.

Further, the general view that makes the Muttaraiyans a branch of the Kalabhras[9] favours the close of the 6th century for the beginning of the Muttaraiyan rule at Tanjore.

Thus under the limitations imposed by these considerations the following chronological scheme can be made for the Muttaraiyans, assigning roughly a period of 30 years for each ruler :

1.	Perumpidugu Muttaraiyan	600—630 A.D.
2.	Ilangovadirayan	630—660 ,,
3.	Perumpidugu alias Suvaran Maran	660—690 ,,
4.	Videlvidugu alias Sattan Maran	690—720 ,,
5.	Videlvidugu Muttaraiyan	720—750 ,,
6.	Sattan Paliyili	750—780 ,,
7.	Marpidugu	780—810 ,,

6. 670 of 1909.
7. Sathianatha Iyer, op., cit., p. 431.
8. Ibid.

8. Satrubhayankara Muttaraiyan 810—840 „
9. Videlvidugu Muttaraiyan 840—870 „

Certain changes have been made in the geneology proposed by Mr. K. V. Subrahmania Iyer already adverted to and that for the following reasons: The first three in the geneology are related to each other as father and son. Now, chieftain No. 4, Sattan Maran, claims himself to be the son of Perumpidugu, chieftain, No. 3, and his mother is mentioned as Perumpidugu Perundevi in an inscription from Tirumayyam, in the Pudukottah state.[9] With regard to chieftains, 5, 6, and 7, 5 and 7 are dis connected in the geneology furnished by Mr. K. V. Subrahmania Iyer.[10] But chieftain 6, Sattan Paliyili, claims to be the son of Videlvidugu, chieftain, No. 5.[11] I have placed Marpidugu as chieftain, No. 7 from the evidence of an inscription from Tiuruvellarai, which purports to record the construction of a well called, 'Marppiduguperunginaru' by one Kamban Araiyan of Alambakkam, which is said to have been commenced in the 4th and finished in the 5th year of Pallava Dantivarman.[12] This fixes the date of Marpidugu c. 780 A.D. (the 5th year of Dantivarman). Thus the unconnected chieftains, Videlvidugu, Sattan Paliyili and Marpidugu (chieftains, 5, 6 and 7), of whom the second claims to be the son of the first, get connected. In the chronological scheme, Marpidugu is assigned to the dates, 780—810 A.D., which is actually confirmed by this inscription from Tiruvellarai. At the same time, another inscription,

9. 402 of 1906.
10. E.I., XIII, loc., cit.
11. Ibid.
12. E.I., XII, p. 158.

which attributes the cave at Nartamalai in Pudukottah state to Sattan Paliyili,[13] confirms the date assigned to this chieftain in the chronology, since the period of cave construction in Pudukottah state is assigned to the VIII century and the Nartamalai temple itself to the middle of that century. These facts, it would be observed, are mutually confirmatory of both the geneological and the chronological schemes, here adumbrated.

Any later date assignable to these chieftains would lead to many inconsistencies. Thus, the view of Mr. K. V. Subrahmania Iyer, who makes Sattan Paliyili the contemporary of the Ganga Nripatunga, [14] would assign the middle of the IX century, at the earliest, for Sattan which is inconsistent both with the victory of Vijayalaya and the construction of the cave he claims for him at Nartamalai. The only difficulty in accepting this chronological scheme lies in the reference in the Sendalai inrcription to the opponent of Pandyan Ter-maran as Perumpidugu, possibly referring to Suvaran Maran. It may be that the Maran, referred to may refer to some other Muttaraiyan chief or what is more probable this Maran had the name Perumbidugu also. Though this cannot solve our difficulty it cannot at any rate be taken to nullify a whole scheme otherwise satisfactory.

III

THEIR CONNECTIONS PERSONAL AND POLITICAL

Now, to return to the Irukkuvel-Muttaraiyan relations, chieftain Videlvidugu, spoken of in the inscription as the

13. 365 of 1906.

14. K. V. Subrahmania Iyer, op., cit., loc., cit.

father-in-law of Sembiyan Irukkuvel appears to be chieftain 4 of the geneology, since, though there are two other Videlvidugu Muttaraiyans in the inscriptions (mentioned in our geneological scheme), it is only of this Videlvidugu and of his family that inscriptions from the Pudukottah state (the Irukkuvel territory) speak. An inscription, already referred to, from Tirumayyam (no king, no date) speaks of Perumpidugu Perundevi, the mother of Sattan Maran (wife of Videlvidugu, chieftain 4 of the geneology) as having repaired the temple of Satyagrinatha-Perumal and granted a village to it.[15] The date of this chieftain has been assigned in our scheme as 690—720 A.D. His Irukkuvel contemporary will, therefore, be none other than the great Vikramakesari (675—705 A.D.) He is, possibly, the "Sembiyan Irukkuvel" referred to here—a conclusion to which astonishing confirmation is leant by the name of one of his wives mentioned in the Kodumbalur record as Varaguna, which is very much the same as the name Varagunatti mentioned in the Muttaraiyan inscription as that of the wife of "Sembian Irukkuvel"[16]

A few other inscriptions which refer to the days of the later Irukkuvels make us understand how the Muttaraiyans and the Irukkuvels passed respectively under the Pallava and Cola supremacy. An inscription of Dantivarman discovered at Tiruvellarai mentions one Marpidugu Ilangovel as a royal officer (c. 789 A.D.) and another inscription from the same place dated in the reign of Nandivarman III mentions a certain feudatory,

15. 402 of 1906

16. E.I. XIII, p. 138.

Marpidugu Ilangovelan Sattan (c. 830 A. D.)[17] These names indicate close Irukkuvel-Muttaraiyan connections (the view that both are branches of the Kalabhras has been noted) in the later period of their respective history, though while the Irukkuvel remained loyal to the Cola, the Muttaraiyar seem to have remained loyal to the Pallava.

17. 88 of 1901.

CHAPTER VIII

ADITYAVARMAN AND THE LATER IRUKKUVELS

I

THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION

The history of the Irukkuvels undergoes a transition in the period after Bhuti-Vikamakesari and certainly after that of his successor, Adityavarman. The evidence of the Sendalai record clearly speaks to this, when it refers to the Irukkuvel capital as belonging to "unfriendly kings", as has been already said.[1] The date of the inscription is placed by its editor in c. 750 A.D.[2] Knowing, as we do, the nature of the Irukkuvel-Muttaraiyan relations, it would be unreasonable to suppose that the inscription refers to the Irukkuvels as "unfriendly kings". The natural conclusion, therefore, follows that by about 750 A D. the Irukkuvels had given room to some other power in Kodambalur. The Muvarkovil record, on the other hand, gives, if not a direct, at least an indirect confirmation to this conclusion, since, according to our chronology of the record, the last ruler closes his reign by about 765 A.D. and Parantaka by about 735 A.D.

It is not, however, possible in the present state of our knowledge to identify the new rulers at Kodumbalur

1. E,I., XIII, p. 135 ff.
2. Ibid.

much less to say anything about them. We have to travel from this period almost to the first half of the IX century, when evidences occur for the stationing of a new line of rulers at Kodumbalur, of which the first, Idangalainayanar, was sent down by the Cola Emperor Vijayalaya himself. This is confirmed on the one hand by the Larger Sinnamanur plates, which while referring to this period, calls Kodumbalur as "the seat of one of the powerful Cola subordinates.;"[3] and on the other by the poem of the saint Sundaramurti, who sings of Idangalai as a great Saiva devotee ruling at Irukkuvelur.[4]

The Irukkuvel history of the interim period is not clear, while the history of Kodumbalur is even more obscure during the period. One thing is, however, certain, namely the preponderance of Cola influence during the period over the politics of Kodumbalur. This influence that begins with Bhuti Vikramakesari and his marriage with the Cola princess, Karrali, gets deepened naturally in the reigns of his sons, Parantaka and Adityavarman, who were sons to him through the Cola marriage. It thus appears probable that the chieftaincy of the Irrukkuvels got amalgamated with the Cola kingdom in the reign of Adityavarman, if not in the time of Parantaka himself. It is only under this circumstance, we will be able to explain both the reference in the Sendalai record to "unfriendly kings" at Kodumbalur and the absolutely peaceful nature of the transition from the rule of the Irukkuvels to that of Idangalainayanar at Kodumbalur.

The rulers, Parantaka and Adityavarman, mentioned in the Muvarkovil inscription were not, in this supposition,

3. S.I.I.,XII, iv, pp. 444 and 449.
4. *Tiruthondarthokai*—stanza, 35.

rulers in the literal sense of the term. The supremacy of the Colas must have been the key-note of their rule as that of their successors, if they had any. If what is revealed by the history of a later period can be of any help here, it appears almost certain that the half century that divides Adityavarman and Idangalai must have been one of Irukkuvel settlement throughout the Cola empire, while the Colas gained an increasingly greater hold on the Kodumbalur chieftaincy.

Thus with the opening of the IX century this transition is well on its way. At about the same time, when Idangalai is mentioned in Kodumbalur, we are referred to a host of Irukkuvel officers and village dignitaries, like Pudi Parantakan, Parantakan Sriyavelar, Sembiyan Marayan, Virasola Ilangovel, Virasola Ilango and others' throughout the Cola country.[5] It is at about this time, that the Irukkuvel position as the rulers of Kodumbalur completely changes, as is evident from an inscription in Chittur in the Pudukottah state (dated in the 7th year of Rajakesarivarman), which mentions the Irukkuvels and their capital as things of the past.[6]

II

THE IRUKKUVELS AS ROYAL OFFICERS

Several royal officers and village headmen are mentioned from this time onwards till about the XII or XIII century with the name, 'muvendavelan'. It is not easy to

5. 357, 358 of 1903; 116 of 1896; S. I. I., III, iii, p. 230; 380 of 1903; A. R. E., 1912—13, p. 20.

6. P. II., No. 26.

find any clear explanation for this name, though apparently it seems to refer to service under the Cola king, who was at this time the conqueror of the whole of the Tamil country and thus had in himself the right to the three crowns (the crowns of the Pandya, Cera and Cola.) Some inscriptions accordingly entitle the Irukkuvel as "Mummudicola Irukkuvel."[7] This fact strongly incline us to conclude that the person meant by the name, 'muvendavelan' must refer only to the Irukkuvel. The suffix, 'velan', the first occurrence of the title when the Irukkuvels appear in high stations in Cola service and especially when all other Vel dynasties had disappeared, and again the disappearance of the title with the end of the Irrukkuvel glory in the XIII century are all very suggestive and in favour of our conclusion.

Further, the name 'muvendavelan' itself could have been easily adopted from the name, 'Irukkuvel'. This strictly northern name gets transformed into 'Irungovel' even after a few years of Tamil influence, as can be gathered from the Tiruvisalur inscription in the Pudukottah state.[8] 'Irungovel' latterly becomes 'Ilangovel' and 'Ilango'.[9] In some inscriptions the name 'Ilangovel' also stands as 'Ilangovelar'.[10] The prefix of the name undergoes such transformations, that at last only the suffix, 'velar' stands material to the name. Thus the famous general from Kodumbalur, who is mentioned in the war of Parantaka II with Pandyan Rajasimha, is named in

7. P. II., No. 26.

8. P. II., No. 116 of 1896.

9. 323 of 1903; P. II., Nos., 121, 131 and 151.

10. S. I. I., III, ii., p. 134.

the Tiruvisalur inscription above referred to as Pirantaken Irungolar alias Sriyavelar. If 'Irukkuvel' could be also called as 'Sriyavelar', there is nothing strange or improbable in the same name getting changed as 'Muvendavelan'.

In the light of this identification, various persons of great dignity and high position, whom we may describe as Irukkuvels, are mentioned in the inscriptions of the period. Such are the officers, whom we may describe for the purpose of present understanding as Royal Secretaries, District Revenue Officers, Generals in war, Touring Officers, Temple Managers and Village Headmen.[11] Further, several Muvendavelans appearing in inscriptions of the period with highly significant Cola names, like Colendrasinga, Neriyudaicola, Sundaracola etc.[12] throw a flood of light on the position of the Irukkuvels during this period.

III

THE NATURE OF IRUKKUVEL PUBLIC SERVICE

The number and variety of the Irukkuvel officers appearing in inscriptions is something striking. From being the chiefs of the Government as the Chief Secretary Colendrasinga Muvendavelan[13] or the Royal Secretary Neriyudaicola Muvendavelan was[14], the Irukkuvels are

11. A. R. E., 1918—19, p. 34; 1917—18, p. 30; 1912—13, p. 4.; 1928—29, p. 26; S. I. I., III, i, No. 20; A. R. E., 1924—25, p. 42; p. 20.

12. A. R. E., 1917—18, p. 30; 1918—19, p. 34; 1912—13, p. 320

13. A. R. E., 1917—18, p. 30.

14. A. R. E.. 1918—19, p. 34.

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found as the pillars of Cola administration down to the local Government in villages in persons like Kannan Mallan alias Udayamartanda Muvendavelan and Virasola Ilangovel, who are read in inscriptions as Headmen of villages in the days of Parantaka I and Kulottunga I respectively.[15] One Kulottunga Muvendavelan is mentioned as local administrator in the reign of Kulottunga I. He was perhaps a royal officer especially appointed for the settlement of some grievous village dispute.[16] We also come across in inscriptions names of several Irukkuvel men as Revenue Officers, Touring Officers, Adhikaris, Temple Managers and local stationary officers.[17]

The necessities of the offices occupied by the Irukkuvels must have demanded rare administrative capacity in those who filled them and their successful management and discharge of the responsibility reposed in them is certainly an unmistakable mark of their ability. We have only to remind ourselves here of the implications of office in the Governmental system of ancient India to have an idea of the Irukkuvel achievement in this new role.

An attempt can be made here to understand this position. The Government of the Colas was in final analysis the rule of the Ministers and the Royal Secretary at the centre and of the Temple Manager and Village Headman in every local unit of administration. 'Ancient India set great store by aristrocracy." "Ancient India

15. A. R. E., 1912—13, p. 30.

16. A. R. E., 1917—18, p. 104.

17. A. R. E., 1918—19, p. 64; 1912—13, p. 40; 1928—29, p. 26; 1918—19, p. 50; 1912—13, p. 16; 1924—25, p. 42. etc.

could never think of statecraft without the appointment of ministers."[18] These statements emphasise the supreme importance of the ministerial office in the rule of the king. There was no branch of royal administration, which did not come directly under the influence of the minister, who has been rightly described in the words ascribed to Lord Krishna himself, the first protector of the Irukkuvels, as "the king's own tongue and right hand."[19] No wonder, then, if Parantaka I is himself called by the Irukkuvel name, Vikramacola Ilangovelar in the Anbil copper plates of Parantaka II;[20] and Parantaka II himself goes by the name, Irungolakon (lit., king of the Irukkuvels.)[21] in another inscription.

Several inscriptions of the period give us a clear picture of the way in which the centre carried on its administration. One inscription from Tirumalpuram referring to the difference between the village assembly and the Temple Management, records the king's decision in the matter under the signatures of a number of Irukkuvel officers, like Kondikulavan Sattan alias Parakesari Muvendavelan of Peruthikudi, Solanmuvendavelan of Sikkar, who is mentioned as the 'vaykelvi' or arbitrator, and another Cola muvendavelan, described as the Chief Secretary (*Olainayakam*). The first of the signatories, Kondikulavan Sattan, is mentioned as one "who looks after our affairs" by the king.[22] Another ins-

18. Venkateswara, *Indian Culture*, Vol. II. See also I. H. Q. Vol. I., p. 642.
19. I.A., XIV, p. 69.
20. H. II. S.I., p. 41 ; 10 of 1895.
21. 472 of 1908 ; S.I.I., III, iii, p. 376.
22. S.I.I., III, iii, pp. 290—91.

cription of the reign of the king Konerimaikondon registering an order of the king for the restoration of some lands to the Rajesvara temple of Tanjore, which had been wrongly sold by private individuals, is mentioned as having been written by the Royal Minister, Rajendrasimha Muvendavelan.[23] The judgment of the king dispossessing three traitors of their lands recorded in an inscription from Tanjore is signed by the Royal Secretary, Neriyudaicola Muvendavelan.

These examples will be enough to speak to the important and responsible nature of the Irukkuvel service at the centre. Now, coming to local administration it must be remembered that in ancient India the village occupied an important place in the administrative system, every village being a little self-contained kingdom. Interference from the central government was few and far between, and when it did come it came with charm and was accepted with grace.

Thus even membership in the Village assembly was then a post, respected and responsible. Any one intending to become a member of that assembly was to have, besides an express tenancy qualification, an excellent character, and a knowledge of the *mantras* and the sacred rules.[25] The assembly being besides the king's executive and judicial authority in the village was also the repository of the public gifts of money and things for worship in the temple,[26] the house for regulating the prices of

23. S.I.I. II, p. 110.

24. A.R.E., 1918—19, p. 42.

25. Havel, *Aryan Rule*, p. 229; Venkatesvara, op. cit. loc., cit.

26. S.I.I., III, ii, pp., 2, 157—58.

commodities,[27] and exacting reasonable forced labour from the villagers for their common good[28] and the General Revenue and Survey office for the village.[29]

The temple was by itself an independent institution, which, managed its own affairs with an assembly and a headman. It lent money to the Assembly itself in cases of necessity.[30] The temple preferred its complaints in cases of dispute to the Royal Officer, who would then issue his order in settlement of the dispute.[31]

The Village Assembly and the Temple Management were thus the two great administrative institutions in the local units; and justice in the village was balanced between these two organs of Government. As the head of the Village Assembly, the Headman was to be a paragon of justice "noble, good, learned, truthful, honest, impartial, and unavaricious", as the *Tolkappiyam* laid down for men of the earlier generation.[32] He was responsible not merely for justice but also for the king's revenue, for the protection of the village and for the survey and classification of lands, for which he maintained registers and an office.[33] He could dispose of the 'manjukam' (*the poromboke*) of the village according to his own discretion with the consent of the Assembly.[34]

27. S. I. I; III, ii, p. 11.
28. Ibid, p. 20.
29. A.R.E., 1913—14, p. 89; 1918—19, p. 15; S.I.I., III, iii, pp. 328—29.
30. 397 of 1913; A.R.E., 1920—21, p. 35.
31. A.R.E., 1924—25, p. 42.
32. *Tolkappiyam*, sutra, 76.
33. A.R.E., 1913—14, p. 89; 1918—19, p. 15.
34. S.I.I., III, iii, pp. 328—29.

The Temple Manager was, on the other hand, in charge of the revenues of the temple and had to care for the proper conduct of worship. His was an onerous task in watching and checking the misdeeds of the Village assembly and the Headman by reference to the Royal Officer.

IV

THE IRUKKUVELS AS GENERALS

It must be clear from the foregoing section what a beneficial and at the same time responsible service the later Irukkuvels rendered to the country as public servants. We shall try in this section to set forth the Irukkuvel service as Generals in the army of the Colas.

The inscriptions of the period mention names of three Generals belonging to the Irukkuvel family in the service of the Cola. One is Pirantakan Irungolar alias Sriyavelar, who is definitely mentioned in the Tiruvisalur inscription as a Kodumbalur chief;[35] the other is Madurantaka Ilango, who is mentioned in the service of RajarajaI in an inscription from Kudumiamalai in the Pudukottah State;[36] and the third is Muvendavelan, who is described as a famous general of Virarajendra in one of his inscriptions describing the battle of Kudalsangamam.[37]

The paucity of Irukkuvel records that have come down to us limits us to a knowledge of only these three, though there is every reason to assume that many more of like calibre from the Vel family could have served the Cola monarch in his numerous and victorious campaigns.

35. P. II., 16. of 1896.
36. Ibid., 121, 131, 151.
37. S.I.I., III, i, No. 20.

Still, the services to which inscriptions give pointed reference with regard to even these three men furnish more than enough evidence of the stuff of which the Irukkuvels were made. Further, in estimating the contribution of the Irukkuvels to the martial glory of the Colas, it must be remembered that in ancient Cola days it was not uncommon for the royal minister himself to follow the king to the battle-field and engage in active warfare.

From all these points of view, the achievemnet of of the Irukkuvels in the building up of the Cola empire appears more weighty than mere records mentioning names of their generals would indicate. This can be better explained by a reference to the peculiar compli–cations of the Cola foreign policy and the tremendous responsibility it entailed on the Minister, the General and the other royal offieers.

At the time when the Colas began their imperial foreign policy they had to contend with the rising Rashtrakutas and the Chalukyas in the north of the Peninsula and with the Pandyas in the south, besides smaller dynasties like the Banas and the Gangas.

The last, however, were only a small obstacle to the Cola aggression, since as a dynasty closely allied to the Pallavas and conquered by them they could be of little hindrance to the Colas, who had brought the Pallavas under their suzerainty. But it was a different question with the Banas. They had to be conquered by force of arms, which the Cola king Parantaka I did in 915 A.D. He then conferred their territory, we are told, on the Ganga king Prithvipathi II—certainly an act of first rate

diplomacy, especially in the days, when the Colas had to fight on a wide front. Curiously enough, we find the Irukkuvels establishing close relations with the Gangas at about this time. Though we are not certain as to the exact nature of these relations, we find Prithvipathi II calling himself by the name, "Viracola Ilangovelar" and his son by the name, "Sembiyan Tamilavel"[38], very significant names indeed enlightening the whole nature of the Cola-Ganga-Irukkuvel alliance, during this period.

Thê Ganga-Irukkuvel alliance is to be traced back to the early days of the latter's colonisation of the peninsula. This is to some extent confirmed by the Nadagam plates of the Ganga Vajrashtra, which mentions a grant of twelve villages made by the prince to the temple and the whole group of them is styled in the inscription as "Velpura Vishya". Now, if we remember that the southern route of the Velir migrations lay through the Ganga country and through Velpuram (Velarpuram), this conclusion is further strengthened. It will, therefore, be only reasonable to say that the help of the Irukkuvel to the Cola in his overcoming the opposition of the Bana and the Ganga must have been very considerable indeed.

The Pandya opposition in the south flamed up in three Cola-Pandya wars beginning in the reign of Parantaka I. The first campaign was launched by Pandyan Rajasimha in the year 910 A. D. But it came to nothing on account of the strength of the Colas, that was perhaps backed by that of the Ceras also. In the reign of Parantaka II, however, the Pandyan enemy gathered

38. S.I.I., III, iii, p. 221.

strength enough for a second attack. It is possible that he was now supported by the Ceylonese army, as he was in fact in the first campaign. One of the inscriptions of Parantaka II from Tirukalittattai appears to contain a reference to this Ceylonese invasion of the Cola kingdom in a passage which begins with 'ila' (referring perhaps to 'Ilam' or Ceylon) but unfortunately gets damaged thereafter.[39] The Mahavamsa, on the other hand, has a clear reference to a war between the Ceylonese king Udaya III and Parantaka and the reason attributed to the war is the attempt of the Cola king to take possession of the Pandyan regalia from the court of Udaya.[40] At the same time a Pandyan inscription conveys the information that the Pandyan king Rajasimha was staying in the court of Udaya, which he had to quit in haste on account of civil war in the island, even leaving his crown and robes behind.[41] These lines of evidence portray a situation of great moment in South Indian history, at which a desperate Pandyan king backed by the forces of Udaya stands determined to try his fortune with the Cola. It was in this event that the Irukkuvel general Sriyavelar proved his worth to his sovereign master, and helped to drive the Pandya, as the Kanyakumari inscription of Virarajendra graphically informs us, "to seek refuge in the forests".[42] An inscription of the time of Parantaka himself tells us that Sriyavelar "died in the battle-field in Ceylon in the 9th year of Sundaracola's (Parantaka II) reign".[43] Was then the war carried into Ceylon? Though

39. S. I. I., II, p. 387.
40. *Mahavamsa* (Wijesinha), p. 84.
41. S. I. I., II, p. 387, also F. N. 6.
42. Kanyakumari Ins., verse, 63; 302 of 1908.
43. 116 of 1896; H. I. S. I., p. 48.

it may not be easy to answer this question definitely, all available sources of information point in the direction of the Cola forces having pursued the Ceylonese enemy into his very kingdom. If some day this should be verified, the part played by Sriyavelar in this war must ever be remembered as epoch-making. The trouble of the Pandya in alliance with the Ceylonese ruler again appeared, however, for a third time in 1018 A. D., during the time of Rajendra, when success crowned the Cola attempt to subdue both the Pandya and the Ceylonese kings, whence Rajendra entitled himself as the "Mudi-konda" (lit., 'the crowntaker)'.[44]

Towards the close of the first millenium after Christ, Rajaraja invaded the very heart of the Chalukya country, Rattappadi Seven and half lakh, and defeated its chief, the Chalukya Satyasraya. Rajaraja's son and successor, Rajendra, conquered with his great warlike army eastern and southern Mysore and extended his kingdom to the frontier of Banavase on the N. W. Thus it happened that the reign of Rajadhiraja became a period of great war between the Chalukyas and the Colas in which the Cola king himself got defeated and killed. The battle of Kudal Sangamam fought in the 5th year of Virarajendra is the great battle in which this defeat is set right by the decisive victory gained by the Cola king Virarajendra over the Chalukyan king Somesvara. The victory in fact was so decisive, that Virarajendra marched straight to Vengi, conquered the kingdom and bestowed it on Vijayaditya, thus settling the succession dispute that arose consequent on the death of the

44. Sathinatha Iyer, op., cit., p. 435, 437.

Eastern Chalukyan king, Rajaraja. The victory gave such a violent change to the fortunes of the Western Chalukyas, that their king drowned himself in the Tungabadra.

The events leading to the battle of Kudal-sangamam and even more its consequences for either side made it one of the severest of battles in the annals of the combatants. Inscriptions naturally mention names of several royal princes of the Cola house as having been engaged in the fight at Kudal-Sangamam.[45] It was in this battle that Muvendavelar played his decisive part. An inscription of Virarajendra himself records in a very descriptive style the prominent part played by this General in this engagement:

"The enemy full of hatred, met and fought against him (the Cola) a third time" so the inscriptions runs, "hoping that his (former) defeats would be revenged. The king defeated countless samantas, together with these (two) sons of Ahavamalla, who were called Vikkalan and Singannan at Kudal Sangamam on the turbid river".

After describing the various kings and allied princes who composed the Cola army, which resembled "the northern ocean", the inscription proceeds to describe the achievement of Muvendavelar:

"While Kesavadandanayaka, Ketarasan, Marayan of great strength, the strong Pottaraiyan (and) Irachchayan were fighting, he (Virarajendra) started saying, "Follow, Muvendi, (who wears) a garland of gold and cut to pieces many samantas who were deprived of weapons of war. Then Maduvanan who was in command fled; Vikkalan fled with dishevelled hair; Singannan fled, his

45. S. I. I., III, ii, p. 191; E. I., VI, pp. 20—24.

pride and courage forsaking (him). Annalan and all others descended from the male elephants on which they were fighting in the battle and fled. Ahavamalla too, to whom they were allied, fled before them".[46].

The Cola king is then described as putting on the garland of victory and the crown amidst general applause.[47]

V

THE IRUKKUVELS AND COLA FOREIGN POLICY

Some attempt has been made to set forth the Irukkuvel achievements as Cola generals in the foregoing section. With a view to create the proper perspective from which this could be understood, certain relevant events in Cola foreign policy were also mentioned. In this section, it will be my attempt to show how the Irukkuvel actually helped in shaping and guiding that foreign policy.

Inscriptions dealing with the later Irukkuvels mention names of at least two chieftains, the chief of Vadalanjeri, Sattan Ulagan alias Sembiyan Muvendavelan,[48] and the chieftain Srirangamudaiyan Koyilmayilai alias Parantaka Muvendavelan,[49] who must have belonged to the Irukkuvel race. Possibly, a few more chieftains of this description held sway in the different parts of the country. These would appear to have smoothened the the path of the Colas in their attempt at empire-building.

46. S. I. I., III, i, No. 20.
47. Ibid.
48. A. R. E., 1912—13, p. 25.
49. S. I. I., III, iii, pp. 376—77.

In the present state of our information it is just possible to throw some light on this subject. The name 'Irukkapala,' appears in the geneology of, Uccangi Pandyas as the name of the son of Tejaraja.[50] Rao Bahadur Krishna Sastri identifies him with a cheftain ruling from Kodumbalur itself.[51] Though such a conclusion appears to be incorrect in the light of our previous discussion, it cannot be gainsaid that Irukkuvels must have had close connections with this Irukkapala. During the period of the Cola imperialism, the Uccangi Pandyas were increasing in power in the province of Nolambavadi[52] and showing every sign of allying themselves with the Chalukyas of Kalyani.[53] A Hoysala incription from Arisikare describing Teja's power has the following passage: "There were no kings who did not flee, no people who did not supplicate him, none who did not retreat when he attacked".[54] It is just possible that to secure the alliance of such a powerful ruler the Colas gave one of their princesses in marriage to him. This surmise is to a large extent verified by an incription, which calls him, "member of the Cola family",[55] and another inscription which goes to the extent of stating that Irukkapala and his ancestors "descended in an unbroken line from the Cola emperors"[56] and by the information which the same inscription gives with regard to Irukkapala's daughter, Mahadevi, that she

50. Q. J. M. S., II, p. 115.
51. Ibid.
52. Fleet, Canarese Dynasties, p. 319.
53. Rice, *Mysore*, p. 8.
54. E. C., Vol. V, AK., 102a.
55. H. I. S. I., pp. 91—92.
56. E. C., Vol., V, AK., 102a.

"belonged to the Cola family".[57] Now, the name Irukkapala itself is not without significance, in that it seems to indicate the Irukkuvel connection in this Cola alliance with Teja and his son. It is to be noted that this Irukkapala succeeding his uncle Chediraja takes military service under the Colas very much like the Irukkuvels themselves.

The history of the period reveals another example of such liaison work, if we may call it so, done by the Irukkuvel on behalf of the Cola. In the time of Palamanda Pandya the Uccangi province of Nolambavadi was divided between the Cola and the Chalukya; but the sympathies of Palamanda were decidedly on the side of Vikramaditya I.[58] It was therefore difficult for the Colas to gain a foot-hold in Nolambavadi. Now, an inscription from Arisikare mentions the son of this Palamanda as Tribhuvanamalla but with a second name 'Irukkuvela',[59] certainly indicating Irrukkuvel connections The subsequent history of this chieftain, however, shows definite anti-Cola tendencies, as, for example, in his alliance with Vikramaditya, who finally effected the disappearance of the Cola from Nolambavadi. But far from arguing contrary to our conclusion, this only seems to favour it. It is possible to suppose that Tribhuvanamalla proved himself too clever to the intended alliance with the Colas and actually played his cards better by supporting the Chalukya. An inscription of the time of Vikramaditya tells us that he had to pay a high price for the

57. Ibid.

58. E. C., Vol., XI, DG., 139.

59. Id., Vol., V, AK., 102b.

support of Tribhuvanamalla, whom he had to make the Viceroy of Santalige-Thousand, Banavase and Nolamba-vadi, conferring on him unique titles, not excluding the title of 'Mahamandaleswara', in return for his help.[60] The same inscription charecteristically concludes by describing this hard-won alliance of the Uccangi Pandya as "the defeat of the designs of Rajigacola,"[61]

Yet another instance of the Irukkuvel role in Cola foreign policy is to be found in the history of the Nidugal chieftains, whose greatest chief is called in many inscriptions scattered throughout Anantapur district by the name 'Irungola'[62] That this Irungola must have had close Irukkuvel connections is strongly suggested not only by the name he bears but also by the long and traditional friendship with the Colas to which the history of the Nidugals bears testimony. An inscription from Mysore styles Irungola as Mahamandaleswara Irungol-Cola-Maharajah."[63] "He is said to have effected an alliance with Racamalla, the Sinda of Kurugodu,"[64] whose son again is named Irungola.[65] It would thus appear that the Irukkuvel race had helped the Colas to a very large extent in the successful prosecution of their foreign policy.

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60. E. C., Vol. xi, DG. 139.
61. Ibid.
62. 92 of 1913; H. I. S. I., p. 103; E. C., Vol. XI, ii, 20 etc.
63. E. C., Vol., XI, 11, 20.
64. H. I. S. I., p. 103.
65. E. I., XIV. p. 265.

CHAPTER IX

THE END OF THE IRUKKUVELS

I

PROMINENT CAUSES

The Irukkuvels remained strong till about the close of the XII century, when they began to decline. This was in fact co-eval with the decay of the Cola power itself. The Cola master proved himself a kind and all-providing protector of the Irukkuvel race and that proved fatal to it, once the Cola power began to decline. To add to this, a new class of ministers and generals began to grow and find favour with the Colas. They were the Pallavarayars, of whose history many records have been left in Pudukottah State itself.

II

THE RISE OF THE PANDYAS AND THE DECLINE OF THE COLAS

The Pandyan War of Succession of 1170 between the rival claimants to the throne, Kulasekhara and Parakrama, brought in the interference of the Singhalese General, Lankapura Dandanatha, whom Parakrama requested to help him in the war[2] But before the General could land in Ramnad, Kulasekhara had murdered his rival and Lankapura commenced a ferocious march from Ramnad

towards the Ghats with the intention of meeting one Vira Pandya, who was reported to be hiding here as the sole survivor of Parakrama's family.

The march was made *via* Periakulam in the Madura district to Nettur and Manamadura. On reaching Tiru-vengampattu, he entered into a fight with Malava Cakravarti, who refused to submit to him and marched on to Sembonmari on the borders of the Pudukottah State. Lankapura carried this city by storm in less than half a day. This event in the victorious march of the General affected the interests of the Cola empire, now that the campaign had been launched directly on the state of Pudukottah. The storming of Sembonmari had created for him quite a repute in the territory around this place. and he was honoured by the Vessas and the Yavanas of the locality, who brought presents to him. He also interfered in a dispute between Malava Cakravarti and a Tamil chieftain and settled it by compromise. At this juncture, Lankapura was joined by another valorous General from Ceylon, Jagad Vijaya by name and Kulasekhara was routed and put to headlong flight by their combined effort. This decisive battle was fought at Rajina. From here the generals marched upon Madura, set up Vira Pandya on the throne and pursued Kulasekhara to Tirupattur and Ponamaravati in the Pudukottah State, where they set ablaze a three-storeyed building and many houses and barns full of paddy.[3]

1. For details see *infra*.

2. Sastri, *Pandyan Kingdom*, pp. 129—33.

3. For a good treatment of the whole war see the first pages of Dr. S. K. Iyengar's *South India and her Muhammadan Invaders*, from which the above information also has been gathered.

The ravages of the Ceylonese army must have spread far into the Cola kingdom, if the strength of its forces, increased in valour by its continuous victories, is taken into account. The Chronicle, Mahavamsa, dealing with this campaign, makes us understand that Lankapura had created such a consternation among the inhabitants of the country, that he had to announce by beat of drum that he had come, far from molesting, to protect them.[4]

These circumstances necessitated the Cola entry into the war, ostensibly to counteract the Ceylonese help that attended on Vira Pandya, but actually in utter self defence, since Lankapura was bidding fair to displace the Cola in his own kingdom. An inscription from the Pudukottah State,[5] dated in the reign of Rajadhiraja II, who was the reigning monarch on the Cola throne at this time, informs us that he sent out help to Kulasekhara under the command of a Pallavarayar. The war had in the meantime placed itself definitely within the boundary of the Pudukottah State, Kulasekhara having been chased from Kilanilai to the two ports of Vadamanamekkudi and Manamekkudi at the mouth of the Vellar. Lankapura is said to have set them and Manjakudi adjacent to them on fire. Thus the Cola country was burnt to a distance of seven leagues from the river. He then marched upon Velangudi and thence to Ponamaravati, where a second severe battle was fought between him and Kulasekhara, ending in the latter's defeat.[6]

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4. *Mahavamsa*, Vol II, (Colombo, 1909), p. 202.

5. A.R.E., 1899—1900, p. 27. see also 20 of 1899; 465 of 1905.

6. See Dr. S.K. Aiyengar, op., cit., loc., cit.

The history of this wonderful march of the Ceylonese General, Lankapura, depicts four cardinal trends in the politics of South India during the period under discussion :

(*a*) That the great Cola power was no longer in a position to defend itself and that it was on its last legs ;

(*b*) That the Pandya was rising to his erstwhile power and glory ;

(*c*) That the Irukkuvels were fading away from power and influence ;[7]

and (*d*) That a new line of chieftains by the name 'Pallavarayar' were taking the place of the Irukkuvels in the Cola service.

III

THE RISE OF THE PALLAVARAYARS AND THE FALL OF THE IRUKKUVEL POWER.

Though Kulasekhara was defeated at the hands of Lankapura, the General Pallavarayar is said to have redeemed the Cola country from the hands of the conqueror. Two Cola inscriptions from Arpakkam and Tiruvalangadu respectively make us understand that the General Pallavarayar was successful in several places against Lankapura.[8]

7. It is significant that in a war launched in the basin of the Vellar, the name of no Irukkuvel general or chieftain is mentioned as fighting the enemy. On the other hand, an inscription from the very state of Pudukottah, as has been pointed out, informs us that the Cola sent a Pallavarayar to fight the Ceylonese army.

8. 20 of 1899; 465 of 1905.

Thus the achievement of the Cola General spelt in all probability the rise in power of the family of the Pallavarayars, to the displacement of the Irukkuvel family. The Pallavaraya victories against the Ceylonese General gave the new Cola General such prestige, that the Cola king is said to have given him his daughter in marriage and set him up in rule over the territories conquered by him from the Singhalese forces[9] Thus did the Cola king himself recognise the importance of the service rendered to the country by the General Pallavarayar. From this time onwards inscriptions indeed mention many Pallavarayars in high stations in Cola service.[10]

The Irukkuvels, on the other hand, appear to have become feeble at this time, as can be well understood from the comparative silence of the records of this period about their activity. It is also clear from the fact that the Pallavarayars establish their rule in the basin of the Vellar river itself without any opposition or difficulty. An inscription from Kodumbalur, the *quondam* capital of the Irukkuvels, mentions a Pallavatharaian (Pallavarayan) with Sri Kulottunga.[11] Beyond doubt the General who led the campaign against Lankapura inaugurated a powerful rule in the state of Pudukottah, flushed as he was with his hard won victories. A palm leaf manuscript of the Tamil poem, *Seventhaluntha Pallavarayar Ula*, by the poet called Padikasu Pandaram mentions names

9 Sastri, *Pandyan kingdom*, pp. 132—33; see also A.R.E. 1924, pt., ii; S.K. Aiyengar, *South India and her Muhammadan Invaders*, pp. 9—10; Radhakrishna Iyer, *Pud. Hist.*, Appendix, B, pp. v to ix.

10. See A.R.E., 1918—19, p. 64.

11. P. II., 233.

of 11 Pallavaraya rulers as having governed the state, beginning with Periyudaiyan Pallavarayar and ending with Seventhaluntha, the hero of the poem[12] The *Seventhaulntha Pallavarayan Pillaithamil*, on the other hand, mentions 11 *nadus* or divisions as composing his kingdom[13] like Alangudinadu, Amaravatinadu, Kaduvenkudinadu, Senkathunadu, Thiraperiyurnadu, Vallavalanadu, Meyyamalainadu, etc., ending with Konadu, thus comprising the whole of the state of Pudukottah. Mr. Radhakrishna Iyer, the author of the General History of the State, refers to a petition presented by one Kannanur Servaikar to the Pallavaraya ruler, in which the annual income of the Pallavaraya kingdom is computed at 30,000 *pon*.[14] The author of the above mentioned *Pillaitamil*, on the other hand, refers to the power and influence of these new rulers in language that calls for wonder from the reader and says that even men in far-off Vanga, Anga, Coorg or Canara liked to name their children after the Pallavaraya.[15]

There can be no doubt that this was the period of the Irukkuvel decline. In fact, we note in the records of the period a clear and steady decline in the numbers of the Irukkuvel officers under Cola service and a correspondingly steady increase in the number of the Pallavaraya officers roughly from the reign of Kulottunga III. An inscription from the Varadarajaperumal temple at Tirubhuvani (dated in the 6th year of Rajendra III) for instance registers "the order of

12. Radhakrishna Iyer, *Pudukottai History*, App. B.
13. Radhakrishna Iyer, op., cit., Appendix, B.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.

the Pallava Pallavarayar, the Royal Secretary, made at the request of Vanadhirajar, the Senapathi, that nobody except the residentiary Vellalas of Vakkur should levy or pay any kind of dues within the village; any other Vellala doing this will be considered a transgressor of the law."[16] On a careful scrutiny of the Cola inscriptions dated from the time of Kulottunga onwards I find that only two Irukkuvel officers are mentioned by name, the royal Minister, Rajanarayana Muvendavelan and the Royal Secretary, Minavan Muvendavelan in an inscription from Chidambaram[17] and not even one Irukkuvel chieftain gets mentioned after this date, even in the inscription of Kulottunga, which purports to name all the chieftains under him.[18]

To add to the new situation created by the rise of the Pallavarayars, the supremacy of the Pandyas and the decay of the Colas was fast becoming an established fact at about the same time. As early as 1231, the Pandyan Maravarman Sundara invaded the Cola country from the Pudukottah state and this was just the beginning of a series of invasions to come. It is curious that the state of Pudukottah must have been chosen as the Pandyan base of attack. The List of Pudukottah Inscriptions records many inscriptions of this Maravarman,[19] which leaves no doubt in our mind that the Pandyan ruler had made it his stronghold and in course of time as a result of successive invasions the state became an open gateway for the Pandyan attack of the Cola.

16. A.R.E. 1918–19, p. 64.
17. S.I.I., III, ii, pp. 211–12.
18. Ibid, pp. 207–08,
19. P. II., Nos., 282, 320 etc.

The passing away of Cola imperialism and the rise of Pandyan hegemony became a *fait accompli* with the commencement of the reign of Maravarman Kulasekhara in the last quarter of the XIII century, from when many inscriptions in the Pudukottah state begin to be dated in the reign of Pandyan monarchs. This may also be taken as the probable date of the final disappearance of the Irukkuvels from history for all intents and purposes. An inscription of the 42nd year of Maravarman Kulasekhara from the Muccukundesvara temple at Kodumbalur transfers the Ilupaikudi fields originally endowed to the temple to one Tenai Tirunelveli Udaiyan on condition of improving them and paying *varam* to the temple.[20] Possibly no member of any consequence belonging to the Irukkuvel race was then in Kodumbalur or anywhere in its vicinity. That it was so is borne out by another inscription of about the same time, recording the decision of the trustees of the Kodumbalur temple in the matter of an offence committed by the trustees of the Mangiliyanallur temple, in which no Irukkuvel name appears.[21] In fact evidences at our disposal point to a steady decline of their fortunes from this period onwards. Thus an inscription from the Pudukottah state informs us of the pathetic fact that one Virasola Muvendavelan sold his land to the temple for 40 *panams* unable to pay the assessment due on them.[22] Many are the inciptions, which refer to such a sad state of affairs, of tenants absconding without paying the assessment due on them, lands being sold to pay the assessment etc.

20. P. II., 545,
21. Id., 601.
22. Id,, 415.

IV

INTERNAL TROUBLES AND THE ARRIVAL OF FOREIGN ELEMENTS

The wars that marked the transition from the Cola to the Pandya rule naturally brought a feeling of insecurity among the people, to which the abscondence referred to above also bears testimony. With the passing away of the Cola and the coming in of the Pandya, there was a landslide in South Indian politics. The day of the Cola feudatory had set and that of the Pandyan ally had begun. The Vellalas, in particular, had lost their common bond of union and begun to fight with one another. These internal dissensions gave room for the entry of a third party, which after settling the little quarrel among them, entrenched itself upon them. Such is, in short, the story of the last chapter of the Irukkuvel life and glory portrayed in this work.

So far as the Vellalas of the Pudukottah state were concerned, Mr. Radhakrishna Iyer of the *General History* of the State mentions an instance, in which a quarrel having arisen between the Vellalas of Ko-nadu and Kanadu, each group summoned the help of 300 and 500 families of the Maravar tribe respectively, who made capital out of the invitation by plundering the country extensively and settling themselves finally in places like Mangudi, Marutantalai and Puduvayal.[23] This was soon followed by numerous and more extensive Maravar settlements in the state, of which the most important was that of a Marava Chief, Netiraja Pandyan, who

23. Radhakrishna Iyer, *Pudukottai History*, p. 63.
24. Ibid.

established his rule in Ponamaravati.[24] Surrounding it by a fort he called it "Maravar Madurai",[25] and made the Pandyan influence bear upon the state. The Maravar were valiant men and the people were willing to sell them or even make grants of lands and sometimes whole villages in return for protection in those unsettled times. Numerous inscriptions of the period do record such happenings.[26] Thus the people of Idalyarur, Karaiyur and four other villages round about Maravar Madurai granted of their own accord lands to 200 families of Maravars and settled them in Alangudi and Mukkul-pattanam.[27] On the other hand, there were villagers who were willing to sell their lands to defray the payment of taxes to Government, and the Maravars being able to buy them became inordinately powerful.[28]

The increasing settlement of the Maravars was followed by the incursion of the tribe of the Kallar, who soon filled the State to such an extent that to this day the ruler of the State traces his origin to this tribe. Now, several copper plate records from the state of Pudukottah itself inform us that consequent on internal quarrels among the Karala Vellalas the Kallar were called in and settled here.[29]

Nothing was needed to complete the end of the Irukkuvel glory, when the Muhammadan invasion under Malik Kafur delivered it the last blow. His South Indian invasion dated about 1310 A. D., in which he is

25. Ibid.
26. See, for example, P. II, Nos., 606, 615, 741 etc.
27. P. II., No., 741.
28. Radhakrishna Iyer, *Pud. Hist.*, p. 65.
29. Pudukottah State Manual, p. 18.

said to have gone down as far as Ramesvaram must have given a rude shock to all established government and chieftaincies, throughout the Peninsula. The Muhammadan invader is said to have marched on Madura from Kannanur near Srirangam,[30] mostly through Kodumbalur and Ponamaravati, which lay on what was then the most beaten path to Madura from Trichinopoly.[31] An inscription from the Bhumisvara temple at Rangiam, Tirumayyam Taluk, mentions the rule of a Muhammadan named Adi Suratta(n) within the territory of Kodumbalur about the year 1331 A. D. which is given in the inscription in the Hegira era.[32] The same inscription purports to register a grant of *padikaval* rights made by the residents of Adanur in Kananadu to those of Rasingamangalam in Ponamaravatinadu "for giving them protection during the Muhammadan invasion". Another inscription from Adanur informs us that "the invasions of the Muhammadans made life insecure".[33] The inhabitants of the place are, therefore, said to have transferred the *padicaval* rights to a Pallavarayan called Vijayalayadevan[34].

The Irukkuvel name dies away from now.

30. *S. K. Iyengar, South India and her Muhammadan invaders,* pp. 104—107.

31. Ibid.

32. P. II., p, 103; Muhammadan Coins have also been dug up in Kodumbalur itself.

33. Radhakrishna Iyer, *Pud. Hist.*, pp. 79—80.

34. Ibid.

CHAPTER X

IRUKKUVEL INFLUENCES

I

ON SOCIETY AND ADMINISTRATION

The chief feature of the social condition of the Irukkuvel days was the great development of the caste system, combined with highly developed forms of occupational guilds, though the general condition of the village was still that of one corporate unit. In the words of a writer describing the social organisation of the period, "the village, for that matter, the whole kingdom, was a corporate unit".[1] The period of the VII century in ancient Indian history is a period of social ferment, charcterised by the conjoint existence of opposing elements of social freedom and social bondage, the former expressed in the multifarious games and amusements, which helped the free concourse and mixing of people of different castes and the latter expressed in the tightening bonds of the growing caste system and developed forms of occupational guilds. It was the period also when caste system expressed itself as the best type of social organisation, shorn of all its present communal barriers, that were only beginning to show themselves.

The century, then, was one of social transition. From a religious standpoint it was even more so, being

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1. Venkateswara, *Indian Culture*, Vol., I, p. 234.

the period of the flowering of the *bhakti* cult and the temple architecture and the growth and spread of the Saivite doctrines preached by their well known devotees, Appar and Sambandar. This meant a great change from the traditional beliefs and the "impersonal godhood" of the Buddhists and Jains. The key-note of the present change was indeed the elaboration of the idea of a personal God," the soul-saving supreme being", to whom the devotee was related now as a child, now as a lover and now as a pupil and in whom he had to finally merge himself.

The temple architecture came to great advantage in the exposition of this ideal. Thus we find during this period much attention paid even to the smallest of temples. In a way the South Indian temple of the VII century resembles the Greek temples of ancient history, in that it served as a rallying point for all the people in the village. Round the village temple it was that not only men turned their attention towards God but also towards their féllow-men. The village assembly met either in the temple or under the shade of the big tree that usually adorned the temple premises to discuss village administration and to settle petty quarrels. In a word, it was round the temple that the life of the people was made and the different strands of their social life were gathered. Naturally the temple becomes the important spot of the Village, meriting all the care, which the people could bestow on it. Hence from the King downwards to the lowest of his subjects become its donors in an increaingly great number, as our inscriptions referring to the period so plainly demonstrate. Small wonder, therefore, if the temple grows in a short

time to be an administrative institution first of its own affairs and then of the affairs of the whole village. It also becomes the centre of public discussion, social intercourse, and free education. With the growth of the temple organisation and the spread of lively religious teaching, the education of the country also began to spread apace; and this was not a little helped through the medium of the guilds, *maths*, and *ghatika* organisations.

The influence of a rising chieftaincy with a number of cultured followers and caste men as that of the Irukkuvels must have been really great on the social history of this period, though the comparatively slender and evanescent account that has come down to us of their past history makes it hard to assess this influence in anything like an appropriate manner.

If a document of a later period can be cited here, it makes plain the amount of interest taken by the later-day successors of the Irukkuvel community in the famous guild centre at Aihole. An inscription of the period of Rajendra I which gives a short description of this guild mentions 32 Velarpurams among its members and the Vellalas among its "virtuous protectors".[1] The editor of the inscription makes a note-worthy remark that, saving the 64 *ghatikasthanas* these Velarpurams formed the greatest number of the guild's constituents.[2] In the absence of contemporary evidence this document can be taken to show with tolerable certainty the important role that must have been played by the Irukkuvels them-

1. E.I. IV. p. 296.
2. Ibid, note, 2.

selves in the formation of the guilds and the moulding of the general social and economic transactions of their day.

Better and more numerous evidences have, however, come down to us with regard to the Irukkuvel participation in the religious and cultural life of the country. As we have already seen, the history of the Irukkuvel is spread over a very long period, which comprises the efflorescence of both the Buddhist and Jain cults as well as of the *bhakti* cult of the VII century.

Evidences at our disposal seem to point to the fact that though Buddhism was not altogether discarded by the Irukkuvels, Jainism found favour at their hands in the first period of their glory. The territory round Kodumbalur and the state of Pudukkottah in general bears the impress of the Jain sway which must have been once powerful in these parts. Mutilated images of Jain gods are found to this day scattered throughout the State and in particular, in places like Vellanur, Ammasatram, Nartamalai and Sittanavasal. The two last places remain even to this day as pilgrimage centres for the Jains. The Nartamalai region is famous for its two cave monasteries and the temple at Melmalai which while it copies in many ways the style of Kodumbalur temple (the image of the *nandi* being prominent on the *vimana*, for instance) is in some respects typically Jain, as in the circular *garbhagriha*, which would remain unique in South Indian architecture but for its one model in the temple at Tiruparutikunram, which is again a Jain temple. Sittanavasal is famous for its five life-size images of the Jain *tritankaras*. An inscription from Chettipatty also called Samanarkunru, (meaning literally "the hill of the Jains,") refers to a big

monastery of the Jains having existed at the place, spacious enough to accommodate 500 monks.

Now, coming to the Irukkuvels in particular, an interesting inscription on a boulder standing opposite to Andarmadam on the Tenimalai hill refers to the institution of a 'pallicandam' (Jain monastery) "of four and quarter in respect for Malayadwajan, a Jain muni by the king Irukkuvel.[3]" This record refers to the founding of a Jain monastery by the Irukkuvel chieftain, which he appears to have endowed with $4\frac{1}{4}$ *veli* of land for its maintenance. The monastery is said to have been started "in respect for Malayadwajan", whether in his memory or at his request it is not possible to conclude from this record. This inscription is unfortunately not dated, so that it is not easy to decide who could have been the chieftain of the Irukkuvel line responsible for the founding of this institution. By a consideration, however, of the available evidence both from the side of the Irukkuvel and from the Jain side, it seems possible to identify this chieftain as Anupama, who is called in the Muvarkovil inscription "the builder of the sangha" ('Samghakrit'). This would date the foundation roughly in the middle of the VI century (following our chronology). This date would well fit in with the period of Jain glory, which begins to set with the beginning of the VII century. Further, two Jain scholars, Dharmadeva Acarya and Kanakacandra Panditha, are referred to twice in inscriptions from Aluruttimalai and Ammasatram respectively referrable to the same period as that of Anupama,[4] or more correctly, to the period of Paradurgamardana. It is possible that

3. P. II., No. 9.
4. Rangachari, *Inscriptions*, III, p. 1623; 164 of 1904.

the 'pallicandam' referred to in the Tenimalai inscription was an educational institution, the type of which was so frequent in the state of Pudukkottah during this period, of which the spacious monastery of Chettipatty (already mentioned) is an example. The two Jain teachers spoken of by the Aluruttimalai and Ammasatram inscriptions were possibly teachers in the 'pallicandam' of Tenimalai.

With the passing away of the VI and the beginning of the VII century A. D., the two northern religions, Buddhism and Jainism, begin to fade in South India and orthodox Hinduism begins to reassert itself polished and energised with a new philosophy more acceptable to a people accustomed to the idealism of the two religions from the north. In the course of this new exposition of the old religion several schools of philosophy sprang up. Of them one was the Kalamukha form of Saivism, technically called by the Saivites as "inner religion."

Now, the Kodumbalur record from the Muccukundesvara temple so informative for our subject,[5] tells us that Bhuti Vikramakesari (675-705 A.D.) "having built three shrines in his own name and in the names of his two wives, he (Vikramakesari) set up Maheswara (Siva) and presented a big *matha* to Mallikarjuna who was the chief ascetic of the Kalamukha (sect) with eleven villages for feeding fifty ascetics of the same sect (here called *asita-vaktra*)." The support thus given by Bhuti Vikramakesari to the Kalamukha ascetic just as he had set up the image of Maheswara shows undoubtedly the decided conversion he had made to Saivism, of which he seems to have upheld the Kalamukha system of philosophy.

5. A.R.E., 1907—08, p. 80.

The origin and growth of this new philosophy in South India also offer some indication in relating it to the Irukkuvels. From all ascertainable evidence we come to understand that this philosophy had its origin from Belgaum in the Canarese country. where a quarter of the town was once called after the Kalamukhas. The Dakshina Kedareswara temple of the place was then under the complete management of the Kalamukha achariyas.[6] It would appear that the Kalamukhas projected a tour from Belgaum southwards intent on propagating their philosophy. An undated Canarese inscription from Dharmapuri, Salem district (ancient 'Tagaduru') praises the Kalamukha teacher called Vidderasi.[7] The inscription is on a stone set up on the big tank at Dharmapuri, which is said to reflect "the image of the whole earth, for in it were the Saiva teacher, Vidderasi......" and names of certain temples are mentioned. It is mostly probable that Vidderasi had set up a school here. to which Mallikarjuna (described as the "disciple of two teachers Vidyarasi and Taporasi" in the Muccukudeswara temple inscription) had come as a pupil. It would appear that Mallikarjuna carried the torch of the Kalamukhas from Dharmapuri to Pudukottah, where he found favour with the chieftain, Vikramakesari. The origin of the new religion from Belgaum (the original Velgramam) must have given a special fascination to it in the eye of the chieftain. Two fragmentary records written in Kannada characters and found on four stones built into the pond in the front of the Muccukundeswara temple seem to give us some further information on the matter, since one of

6. 140 of 1907; *Luder's List*, E. I., VI, p. 93.
7. E. I., X, p. 64; see also F. N., 4, 6.

them mentions Kodumbalur and Vikramakesari. But nothing definite can be made out of them in their present fragmentary state.[8]

The evidences so far discussed, however, cannot fail to depict to us the religious leanings of the Irukkuvel chieftains as well as the influence they ought to have exercised on the religion and culture of their times. Donations to *maths* and educational institutions like the one mentioned in the Muccukundeswara temple are frequently figured in inscriptions dealing with the later Irukkuvels. Thus an inscription from Tirupattur dated in the 7th year of Rajaraja III records the gift of a land to a *matha* by one Kulotunga sola Muvendavelan.[9] An inscription from Kumbakonam dated in the 3rd year of Aditya II records grant of land by Parantaka Muvendavelan to be presented as 'bhattavirthi' to those who expounded Nageswara Prabhakaram in the temple of the place. This inscription also shows that Mimamsa philosophy of which Prabhakara was the founder was at this time popular and found favour with the Irukkuvels.[10] This list can be extended *ad libitum*; but that seems to be unnecessary for purposes of our argument.

But in no department of religion was the Irukkuvel influence more felt and more lasting than in the building and development of the temple. After the Pallavas, the Irukkuvels appear to have been thc earliest to elaborate the ideals and technique of temple architecture. Bhuti Vikramakesari's temple, which the Kodumbalur

8. 141 of 1907, 140 of 1907.
9. E. I., I, XXI. p. 127.
10. 233 of 1911; S. I. I., III, iii, pp. 376—77.

inscription claims as his creation, is so progressive both in plan and style of construction, that it appears to have outgrown the Pallava style and anticipate at least by a century the Cola style of architecture. To add to this, inscriptions also mention several other temples as having been built by the later Irukkuvels all along the banks of the Cauvery in the Cola territory. Such are the Chandrasekhara temple at Tirucendurai, the stone temple at Turaiyur (Musiri) and the Sundareswara temple at Nongavaram.[11]

As for the Irukkuvel munificence in providing for the upkeep of the temples and for the upkeep of offerings and sacrifices in the temple no community in South India has perhaps ever come anywhere near the Irukkuvels. To quote here examples of this generosity is unnecessary and well nigh impossible. The numerous muvendavelar inscriptions, which mention these donations, meet one in a stream in the various inscriptional records like those found in the Annual Reports of Epigraphy. In them we find the range and variety of Irukkuvel donations, mentioning chiefs and subjects, masters and servants, ladies and men as donors without any distinction[12] Thus an inscription from the Tiruvisalur temple mentions Sriyavelar, General, as the donor of land for feeding learned Brahmans;[13] another inscription from the Allur temple (Trichinopoly Dt.) mentions Gangadeviyar wife of Virasola Ilangovelar

11. 319 of 1903; E. I., VII, p. 141; 359 of 1903.

12. 357 of 1903; 375 of 1903; 348 of 1903; 306 of 1906; 470 of 1908; S. I. I., III, iii, p. 25; p. 255; pp. 376—77; A. R. E.' 1921—22, p., 12, 51; 1922—23, p. 1; 1920—21, p. 43; P. II., p. 22 etc., etc.

13. S. I. I., III, iii, p. 255.

(possibly a Headman[14]) as the donor of land for lamp;[15] a third inscription from the Tirumalpuram temple (Arkonam) mentions Madurantaka Accapidaran, son of Virasola Ilangovelar (possibly the son of the same Headman) as the donor of gold for feeding Brahmans;[16] two inscriptions from the Andanallur temple mention Puliyurnattuadigal and Singannimadigal, queens of Sembiyan Irukkuvel as the donors of gold for lamp;[17] one inscription from Vedapuriswara temple at Tirukalittattai mentions Kunjiramalli, daughter of Sriyavelan (the General?) as the donor of money in *ilakasu* for lamp;[18] and another inscription from the Tirukkankudi Parameswara temple at Nandivarmanmangalam mentions Sembiyan Marayan, servant of Virasola Ilangovelar (the Headman?) as the donor of 140 sheep for two lamps.[19]

The Irukkuvel influence on administration must have been something stupendous, if inscriptions pertaining to the period are properly studied and evaluated. The Annual Reports of Epigraphy mention at least 20 varieties of offices borne by the later Irukkuvels, like the offices of the Revenue Officer, Adhikarin of the King, Royal Secretary, Chief Secretary, Magistrate, Touring Officer, Local Administrator, Tirumanthiravolai, Mathiyastha, Village Headman, Temple Manager, etc.[20] The position

14. 323 of 1903.
15. 375 of 1903.
16. 306 of 1906:
17. 348 of 1903; 357 of 1903.
18. S. I. I., III, iii, p. 25,
19. 470 of 1908.
20. A, R. E., 1918—19, p. 64; 1920—21, p. 65, 1918—19, p. 34 1917—18, p, 30; 1928—29, p. 26; 1917—18, p. 104; 201 of 1912; S. I. I., III, i, p. 73; A. R. E. 1917—18 p. 49; 1924—25, p. 42.

here portrayed is that of an administration that had been almost entirely left in charge of these men. To use a modern pharseology, the Irukkuvels in their days were the guardians of the constitution. Given the extremely democratic nature of the ancient Indian constitution, there can be no doubt that the working of the government was in fact determined and conditioned by the Village Headman and the Temple Manager at every local unit and the higher officials at the centre, whose advice the king was bound to follow.

It may not be of course easy to understand the exact implications and responsibilities of the high offices mentioned here. Thus Virasola Ilangovelar is mentioned in an inscription as District Revenue Officer, while some others like Parantaka Muvendavelan and Villavarayar Muvendavelan are mentioned merely as Revenue Officers[21] Was there any distinction in the nature of their offices? It is not easy to answer a question like this and to lable these nice distinctions in modern terminology is not so easy as it is alluring. Of one fact however we can be sure, namely that the work entrusted to these men was even more responsible in nature than the work transacted by the modern revenue officer and certainly more arduous, when we take into consideration the absence of modern conveniences of travel and the like.

The organisation of land for revenue purposes was done in those days in a meticulous way. Thus, for example, a land sale was not to be an affair between the buyer and seller alone, but one which had to be attested

21. A. R. E., 1912—13, p. 40; 1918—19, p. 64; S. I. I., III, iii, pp. 380—81.

to by the Village Assembly.[22] This applied even to a transfer of land to the temple. The nature of land-survey is clearly borne out by the elaborate survey ordered by Rajaraja the Great, which has been aptly compared by writers with the Domesday Survey of William the Conqueror.[23] Every Village Assembly had on its board several Standing Committees for the purpose of the survey and classification of the respective Village lands both on the basis of the kind of cultivation raised and the productive capacity of the land.[24] That re-surveys of land were frequent to re-order lands that became disorganised from changes in tenancy is clear from the inscriptions of the day.[25] An inscription from Tiruparkadal tells us that numerous clerks were employed for the purpose of doing the re-survey work of that village.[26] This impresses on us the care taken by the government of the day in the maintenance of land records. Officers like the Adhikarin mentioned in contemporary inscriptions seem to have been also revenue officers. The Tribhuvani inscription referred to above speaks of a decision in a land classification difficulty that has been signed by the Adhikarin, Kulantaka Muvendavelan.[27]

22. J. B. B. R. A. S., X, p. 192.

23. S. K. Aiyengar, *Ancient India*, pp. 175—76.

24. 262 of 1913; S. I. I., III, iii, pp. 328—29, which last mentions a wet field supervision committe for the village of Tiruparkadal. This would imply that there were separate committees for wet and dry fields.

25. 113 of 1927; A. R. E., 1926—27, p. 83; A. R. E., 1926—27 p. 83; 1918—19, p. 65 etc.

26. S. I. I., III, iii, pp. 328—29; A. R. E., 1913—14, p. 89.

27. A. R. E., 1918—19, p. 65.

Two other offices attributed to the Irukkuvels which need a little scrutiny are those of the touring officer and the local administrator. In all probability, they were officers who toured the country ironing out the differences and quarrels between village and village and village and the centre. They acted in this sense as the welders between the King's government and the interests of villages, which were considered in ancient India as "little republics" exercising full autonomy. The exact nature of the work of the local administrator is not borne out by the inscriptions. Was he a special officer appointed by the Crown for dealing with difficult and intricate cases of local government or was he the Village Headman himself, who was in very deed the local administrator, it is not easy to answer.

With regard to the local government the work of the Village Assembly and the Temple management has already been detailed. But of the very soul of this organisation, the Village Headman and the Mathyastha (otherwise known as the Accountant) a word must here be said to estimate fully the work of the Irukkuvels in these capacities. The Village Headman was in real truth the little village king representing along with his assembly the real great king in his capital. The Headman was not only empowered to collect the royal taxes but could also make exemptions according to his own discretion.[28] He not only took care of all administrative details but was also the agent for planning and carrying out works of public utility such as roads, tanks, and irrigation works as also for repairing the already existing ones when necessary. The Headman with his Sabha was also

28. A. R. E., 1924—25, p, 22; 1928— 29, pp. 26 ff.

something of a Revenue officer and Public Banker in so far as he collected from the people the tax on land and lent loans to the villagers in times of drought and distress. Inscriptions tell us that for the purpose of meeting the demands of a bad season the Headman even borrowed money from the coffers of the temple and helped the poor agriculturists.[29] He would assign of his own accord lands to the needy and the poor.[30] The Headman bound himself responsible for the safety of the village for which purpose he engaged watchers and paid them from the village funds Inscriptions of the times especially from the Canarese Country tell us that the Headman maintained a standing army which he himself captained against cattle-raiders.[31] As head of the Sabha, the most popular court of the day, he exercised full civil and military jurisdiction as the chief of the court. He also regulated prices[32] and exacted forced labour from the people according to his own discretion.[33] The Mathyastha was literally the arbitrator and was therefore a deciding factor in the settlement of cases. He must have been also the maintainer of village records (some inscriptions calling him actually as the accountant). Answering therefore in a great way the work of the modern *Karnam* of the British Administration, he must have been a very dignified officer too. The third great dignitary of the village administration was the temple manager, who was the custodian of the gifts of the public from the king downwards made as offerings to the deity and the

29. 397 of 1913.
30. A. R. E., 1917—18, p. 104.
31. Hayavadana Rao, *Mysore Gazetieer*,, VI, p. 9.
32. S. I. I., III, i, p. 11.
33. Ibid, p. 20.

balancer of the conduct of the Assembly. As the temple gained in importance as centre of education and amusement, its manager really became a great social dignitary of the village.

When all these facts concerning the role which officers had to play in the government of the Irukkuvel days are set out, the great influence which the Irukkuvels must have exerted on the administration of the day must follow as an irresistable conclusion.

II

ON ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The age of the Irukkuvel glory was an art-inspired age, when "the function of art was not differentiated from that of education." The Irukkuvel chieftains, in particular, must be ever remembered as the great exponents of temple architecture in South India, second only to the Pallavas in more senses than one. The architectural skill that is to be seen in the very ruins of the temples in the Kodumbalur territory point to the Irukkuvels having been once prolific and masterly stylists in art. The epic *Silappadikaram* itself speaks of Kodumbalur as a walled town,[34] a fact to which as pointed out earlier, the traces of the moat and the fort called *Karalankottai* (fort of the Karala Vellalas) bear evidence to this day. The writer of the Pudukottah Manual computes that about 150 temples dedicated to god Siva once existed in the State.[35] Further, prescinding the Jain and Pallava art displayed in this State, Kodumbalur has the best to show in the whole region.

34. Silappadikaram, XI, 11. 69—71.

35. Pudukottah Manual, p. 491.

The famous Muvarkovil attributed by the Kodumbalur inscription to Bhuti Vikramakesari is as much to be noted for its architectural style as for its archeological value. A rare and unique technique without a parallel in all the styles known to South India is displayed in this temple. In the first place, the whole edifice stands without a particle of cementing material, which must be considered a feat of engineering skill. Secondly, its decorations, especially the carvings, exhibit an amount of original beauty that is enough to dub its author as a genius in art. Another feature of originality is the absence of the flat roof over the *sanctum*, which is usual with most temples. The upper portion of the *Vimana* is square and copula-like, which is again original. The most original feature, however, is the image of the big *nandi* set up on the *Vimana*,[36] a style that comes to be copied in South Indian architecture only in the time of the Pallava Narasimhavarman II, saving the reproduction found at Nartamalai, whose date, however, is still uncertain. Besides the image of the *nandi* is itself so big, measuring 6' 8" high, 9' 6" long and 10' 6" round the body, that it is second only to the huge figure that afterwards appears in the Rajarajeswara temple at Tanjore. (The Muvarkovil *nandi* is no doubt found today not on the temple but in front of it. But in the opinion of the writer of the State Manual of Pudukottah it was originally placed on the *vimana*.[37])

The two *vimanas* of the three originally built[38] have each an inner shrine about 9' squre, with a court-yard

36. Pudukottah Manual, p. 287.

37. Ibid.

38. A. R. E., 1907—1908, pp. 87—88.

measuring 18′ by 15′. These are noteworthy for the large decorated niches with carved porches on the top. The beautifully posed statue of Valampuri Ganesa, which each of these niches bear resembles the statue found in the niches of the Tirutani temple, which, being of a later period, may have been copied from the Kodumbalur model. The panels adjoining the *Garbhagriha* are five in number and very small in size. They appear in the same number and size in the Nartamalai temple already mentioned.

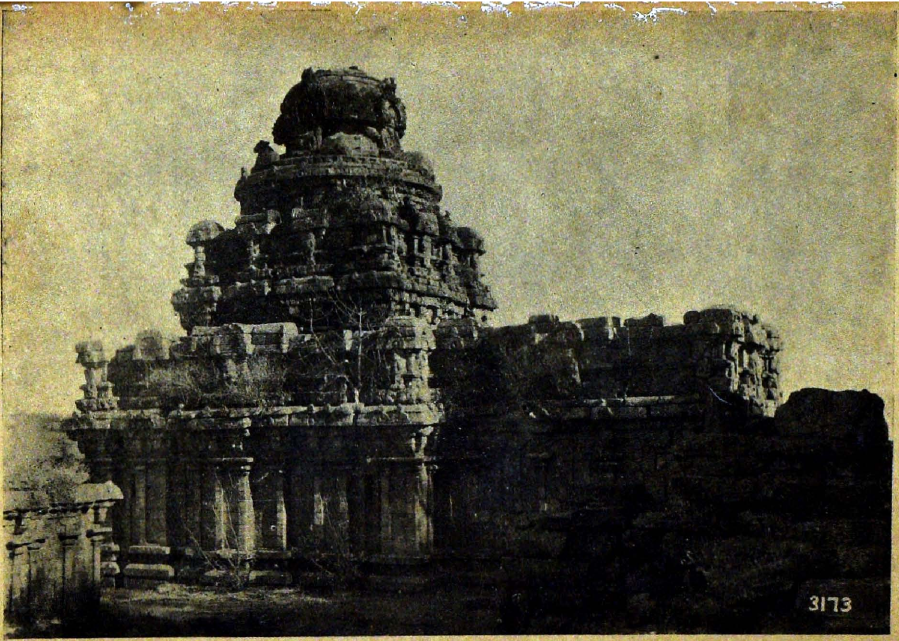
This remarkable little temple at Nartamalai also is well worth the study of art and architecture experts, as it is the one structure which comprises in it the different distinguishing features of all phases of South Indian art and reproduces in a large part the Muccukudeswara and the Muvarkovil. In its round *garbhagriha* it is, Jain in style; in the images of the *dwarapalakas* it is Cola in style; while the rock-hewn nature of the whole temple makes it Pallava in style. Its age, not to speak of that of its builder, must perhaps for ever remain in obscurity but for its imitation of the Irukkuvel style and the fringes and the general technique of the decoration which place it in the early period of the Cola Empire. This temple is a symposium of their different architectural features. The appearance of the *nandi* on the *vimana* and the small panels round the *garbhagriha* may have been given to it by the Cola builder; but certainly the idea must have been given to him by the Muvarkovil edifice of Vikramakesari. This is an evidence of the attraction of the Muvarkovil art.

The Manual of the Pudukottah state makes mention of a temple known as 'Ivarkovil', which, though it does

not exist today, is generally pointed to have existed at the site known today as the "Ivarkovil Punja".[39] This name 'Ivarkovil' is explained by the same Manual writer as referring to the tradition of the five Pandava brothers having once worshipped here[40] It seems to be, however, more reasonable to attribute this temple to the five (*ivar*) connected with Bhuti Vikramakesari, the three (*muvar*) referred to by the Muccukundeswara temple inscription and Vikrama's two sons, Parantaka and Adityavarman. It is stated in this inscription that Vikramakesari built three shrines "in his own name and in the names of his two wives".[41] Is it not possible then that he built another temple in the name of his whole family? The nearness of the site 'Ivarkovil Punja' to Kodumbalur makes this conclusion all the more probable.

The Muccukundeswara temple, as mentioned earlier, is another temple attributable to the Irukkuvel chieftains. In general style, however, it appears to belong to the Cola period. It has an inscription which refers to "one Rishabaperumanadigal of Tirupudiswara temple",[42] a name which relates it with the Muvarkovil, which is known from the time of the Cola Parantaka I as Tirupudiswara temple,[43] though the other name Rishabaperumanadigal is impossible of identification. The mutilated inscription from the Muccukundeswara shrine, which, as has been noted, mentions Vikramakesari's gift to the Jain teacher,

39. Manual of Pudukottah state, p. 492.
40. Ibid.
41. A. R. E., 1907—08, pp. 87—88.
42. 138 of 1907.
43. 253, 293 of 1903.



Nartamalai Temple (Vijayacolesvaram) (*Copyright:* Dept; of Archaeology)

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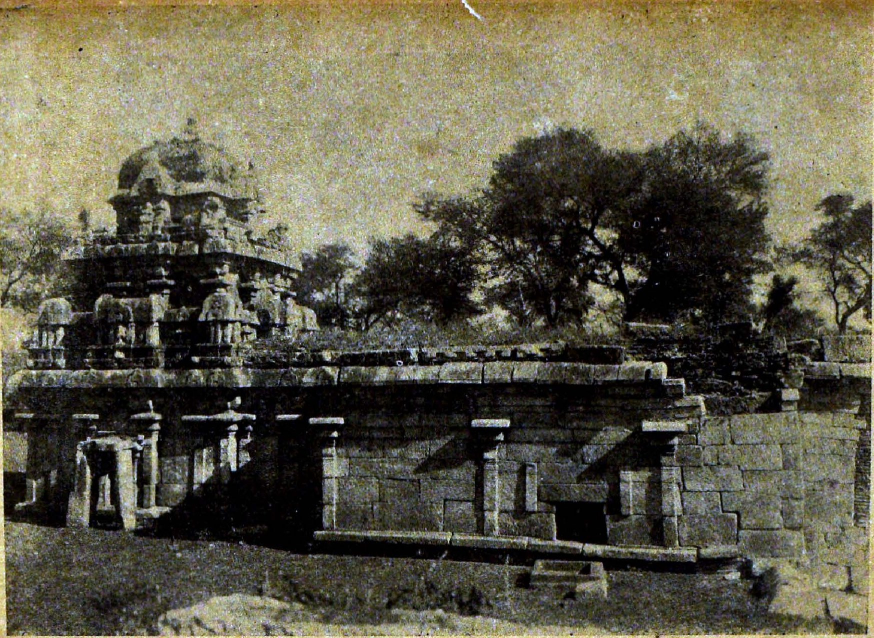

Muccunkundesvara Temple, Kodumbalur (*Copyright:* Dept. of Archaeology)

Malayadwajan, makes us understand however that this temple was closely connected with this chieftain.

The temple of Agastyeswara at Vellanur in the Pudukottah State also appears to belong to this period from considerations of its probable age, style, name and location.

A careful study of the art and architecture of the period reveals certain Pallava-Irukkuvel-Cola connections that are very fundamental in nature. Whether the Colas had already become alive to an artistic sense or not, the passing of the Irukkuvels under their sovereignty played a decisive part in moulding the Cola architectural achievements atleast from the time of Aditya onwards. Scholars have placed the Nartamalai temple above referred to in the days of Vijayalaya without much of positive evidence. The relation it bears to Irukkuvel architecture as indicated above may atleast be taken as a sure indication to call it as one of the earliest temples built by the Colas.

Such then is the close connection between the Cola and Irukkuvel art; and there is even every indication that the Irukkuvel was in a large sense the inspirer of the great art of the Colas. In the first place, the Cola had no art of his own. Whether it is the great Rajarajeswara temple or the famous temple of Gangaikondacolapuram, they are merely enlarged models of the Pallava temple of Kailasanatha at Kanci. If, as it appears from this, the art of the Colas had been borrowed from the Pallavas, the Irukkuvels must have come in as a channel through which this architectural culture flowed from one imperial race to the other. The first temples of the Colas and certain inscriptions of the period give support to this

conclusion. Further, the temples in the State of Pudukottah bearing the Irukkuvel impress and certain facts of the early history of this dynasty appear as evidences on the Irukkuvel side in support of this conclusion. Perhaps no people besides the Pallavas had such opportunities for studying the art of temple-building as the Irukkuvels. The culture of the Jains and Buddhists from whom flowed down in a sense all the painting and architecture of India was the common heritage of the Irukkuvels as of the Pallavas both from their stay in the east coast of the peninsula from Orissa to the Krishna and in the state of Pudukottah itself, territories well-known to art critics as the abode of Amaravati, "the treasure-house of excellent plastic art", and the home of Visnugundin influences and of images and caves of Jain art and architecture. How far and how deeply Jain influences had worked in the State is to be clearly seen even in the present ruins found in it. The history of the Pallavas and the Irukkuvels goes so well hand in hand in the early times and the territories they live in and pass over are so very much the same, that there can be small wonder in the Irukkuvel exhibition of artistic talents and in the Irukkuvels being the informers of Cola art.

The evidence from the Cola side in support of this conclusion is even more emphatic. Two inscriptions from Tiruccendurai and Tirupalathurai belonging to the reign of Parantaka I[44] clearly state that the temples of the places were inspired by the art of the Tirupudiswara temple at Kodumbalur, a name which, as has been already pointed out, signified in the period of Parantaka

44. 293, 253 of 1903.

the Muvarkovil at that place. The name 'Pudi' itself may well be a variant of the name 'Bhuti'.

The evidence of these records is even further strengthened by the fact that they are found along the banks of the Cauvery. It has been already pointed out on the evidence of the Muvarkovil inscription itself that the first conquests made by Vikramakesari on behalf of the Cola king was on the banks of the Cauvery.[45] By this the chieftain seems to have brought under the Cola dominion the Cauvery basin that had hitherto belonged to the Pallava. The Cauvery territory must therefore be taken as the first effective meeting place of the Cola and the Irukkuvel. It is then natural to suppose that the Cola art, influenced as it was by the Irukkuvels, first took shape in this region.

The existence of several temples besides those of Tiruccendurai and Tirupalatturai like those of Andanallur, of Pancandiswara and Pasupatiswara outside the village of Allur, of Sundareswara at Nangavaram, of Siva at Konerirajapuram, of Valiswara at Turaiyur (Musiri) and of Irungolisvaramudaiya Nayanar at Uttamacolapuram seems to point to the place where and the time when Cola architecture began to flower, since an inscription of Parantaka I informs us that his father adopted all these as his own and that he (Parantaka) endowed them.[46] What is more significant is the fact that all the temples mentioned here are known to us from inscriptional evidence as having been built by a member of the Irukkuvel family. The Tiruccendurai

45. A. R. N., 1907—08, p. 87.
46. E. I., XI, p. 50.

temple is said to have been built by Pudi-Adicca-Pidariyar, daughter of Tennavan Ilangovel;[47] the Andanallur temple by Sembiyan Irukkuvel;[48] the Valiswara temple by Sembiyan Viratarayan of Velur;[49] and that of Irungoliswaramudaiya Nayanar by Irungola Advalan.[50] Finally, the evidence of *Periatirumoli*, which attributes to Cola Ko-cengannan not less than 50 temples along the banks of the Cauvery[51] points to the same conclusion, since the date assigned to this Cola king[52] makes him contemporary with Vikramakesari.

47. E. I. VII, p. 141; XV, p. 50.
48. 359, 360 of 1903.
49. 319 of 1903.
50. 337, 547, 549 of 1906.
51. *Periatirumoli*, VI, vi. 8
52. See before.

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